ED BRUBAKER
SEAN PHILLIPS

Houses of the Unholy™

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HOUSES OF THE UNHOLY.

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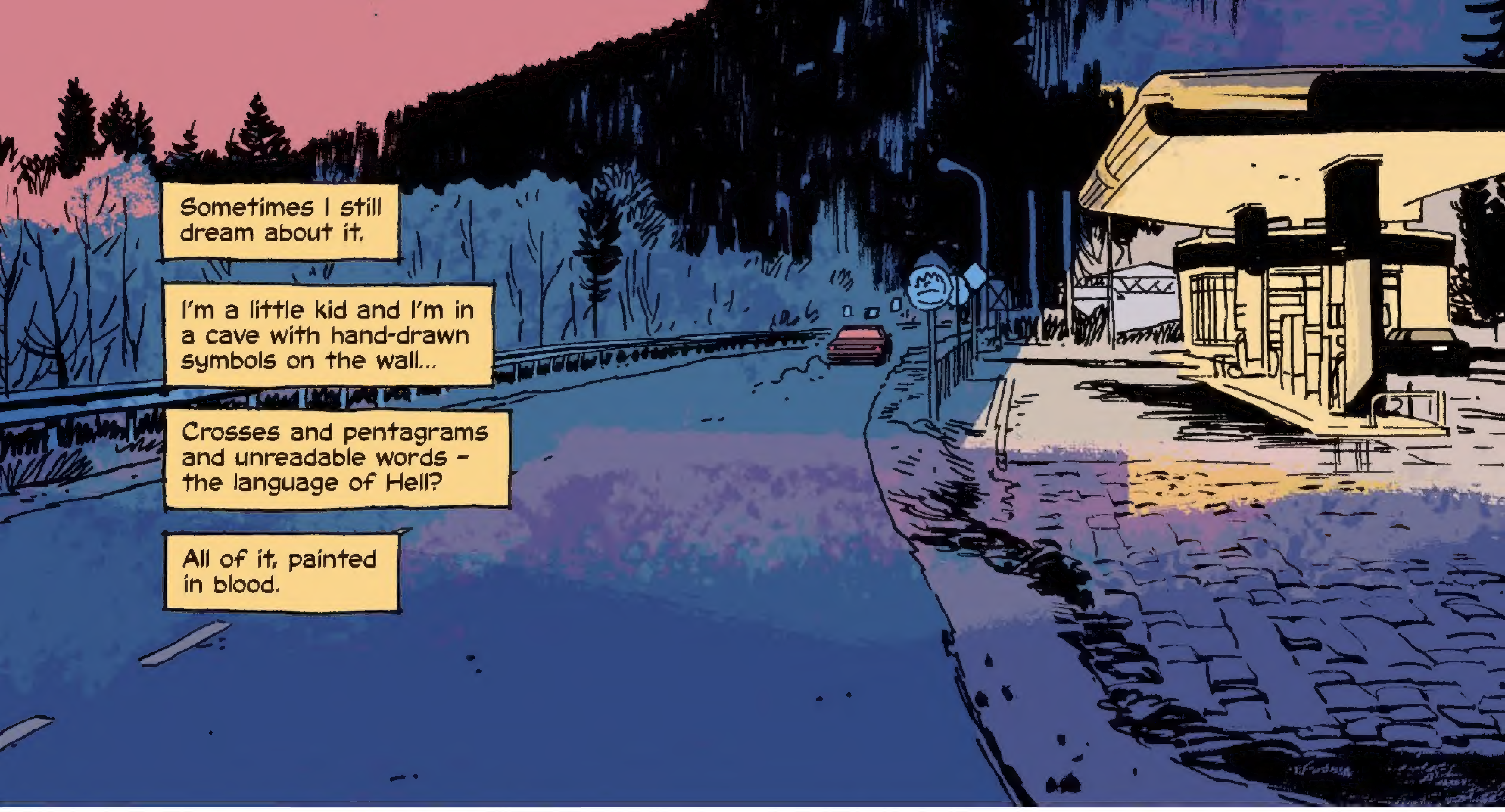
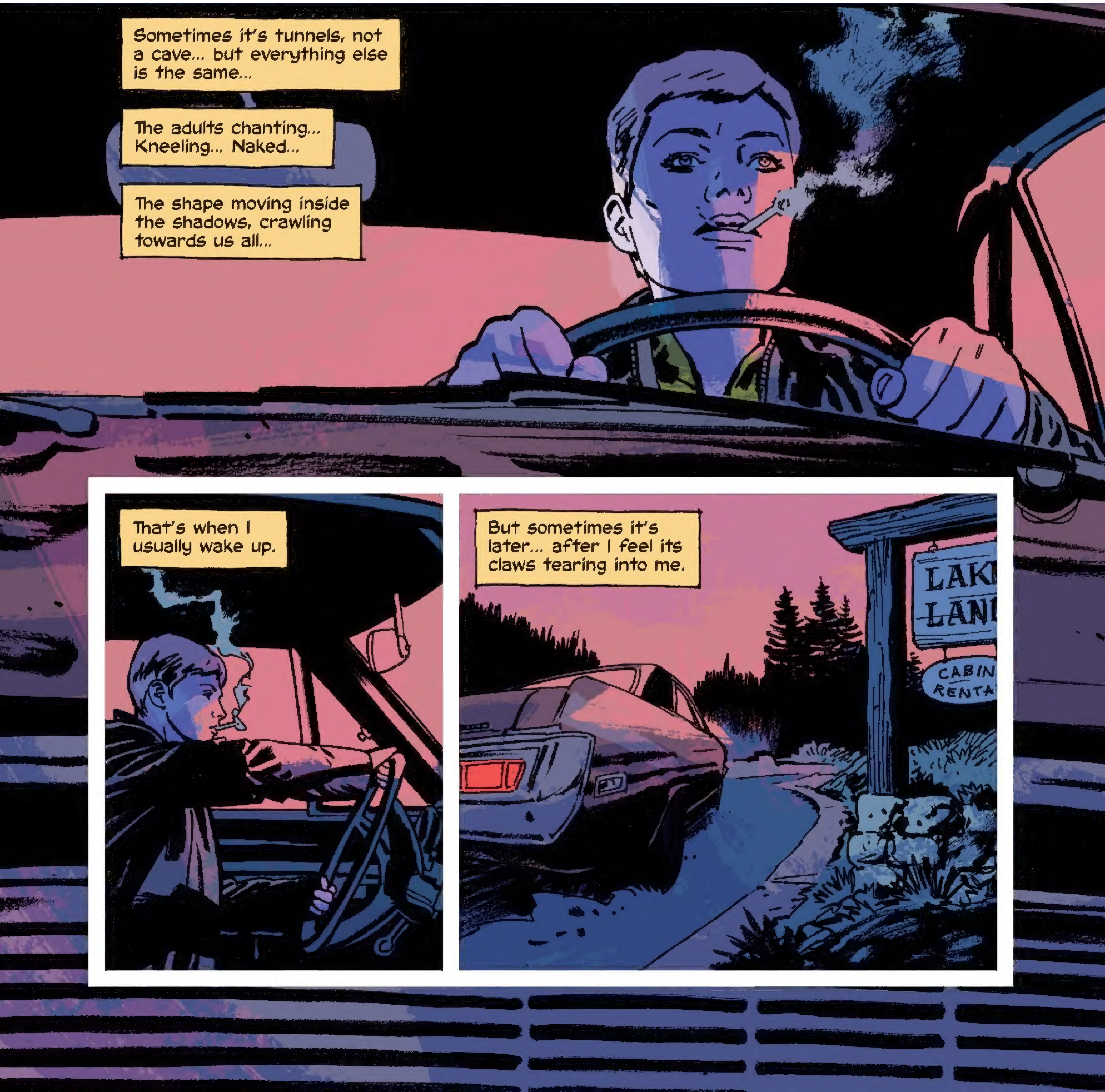
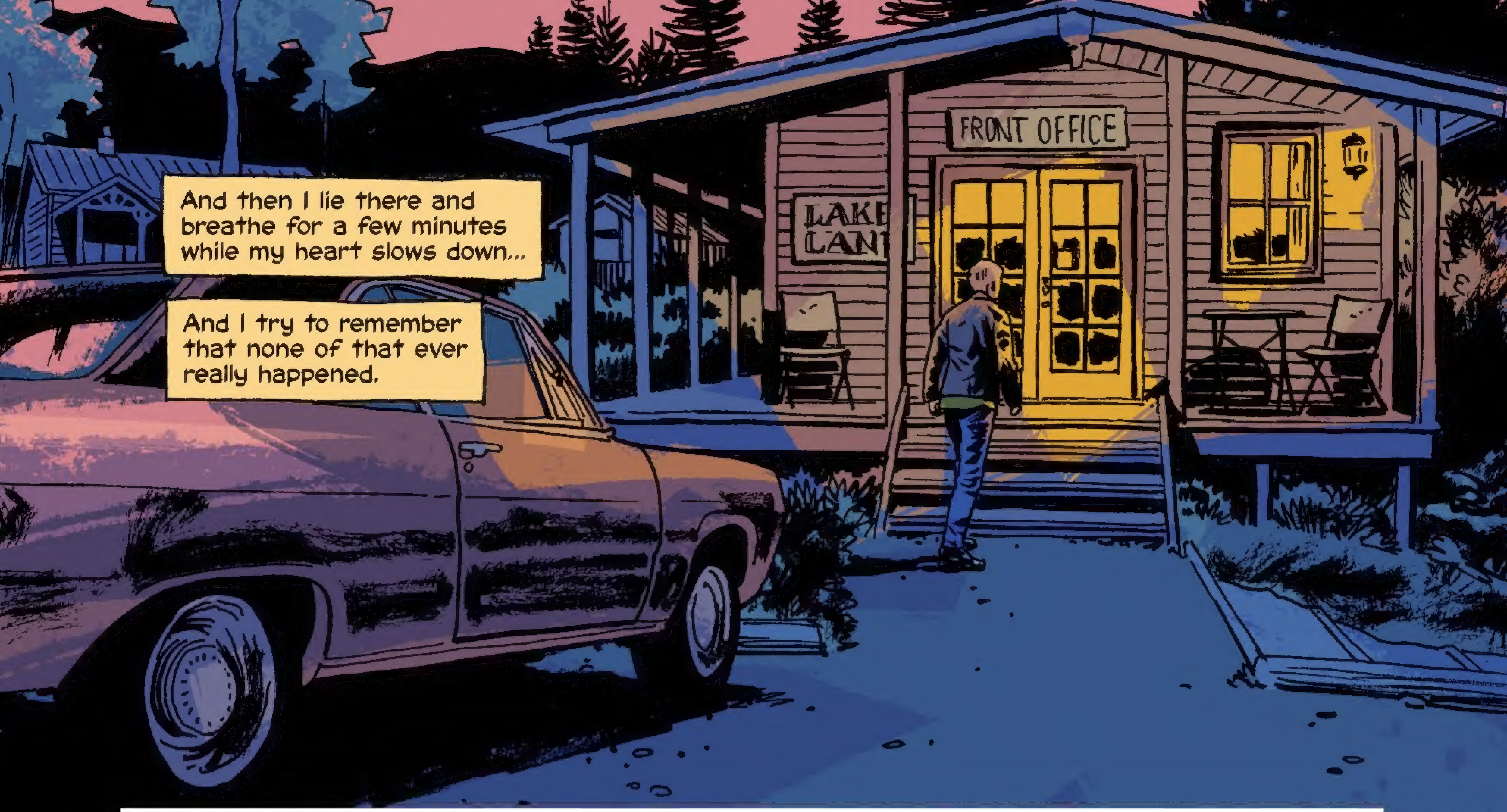
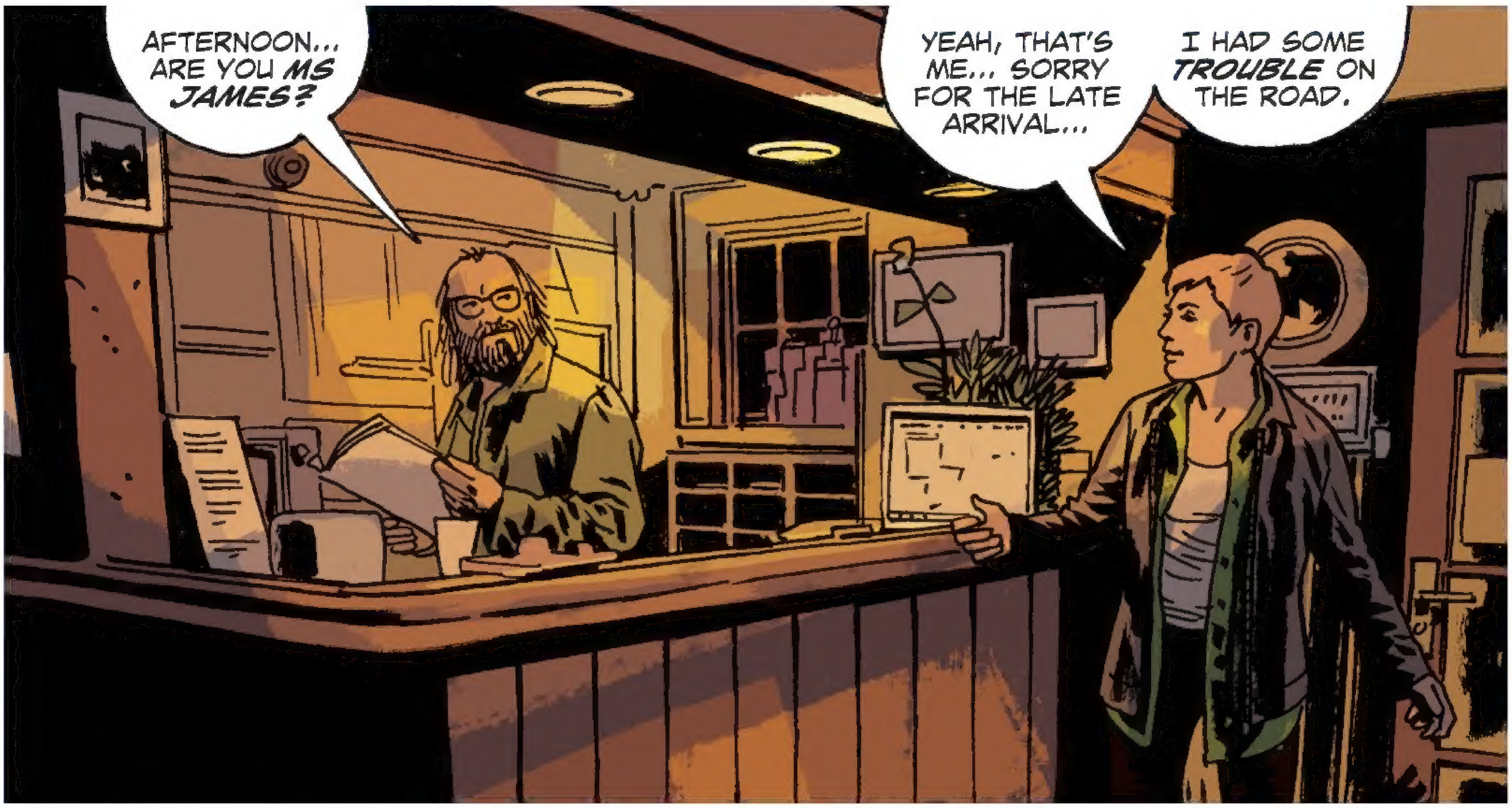
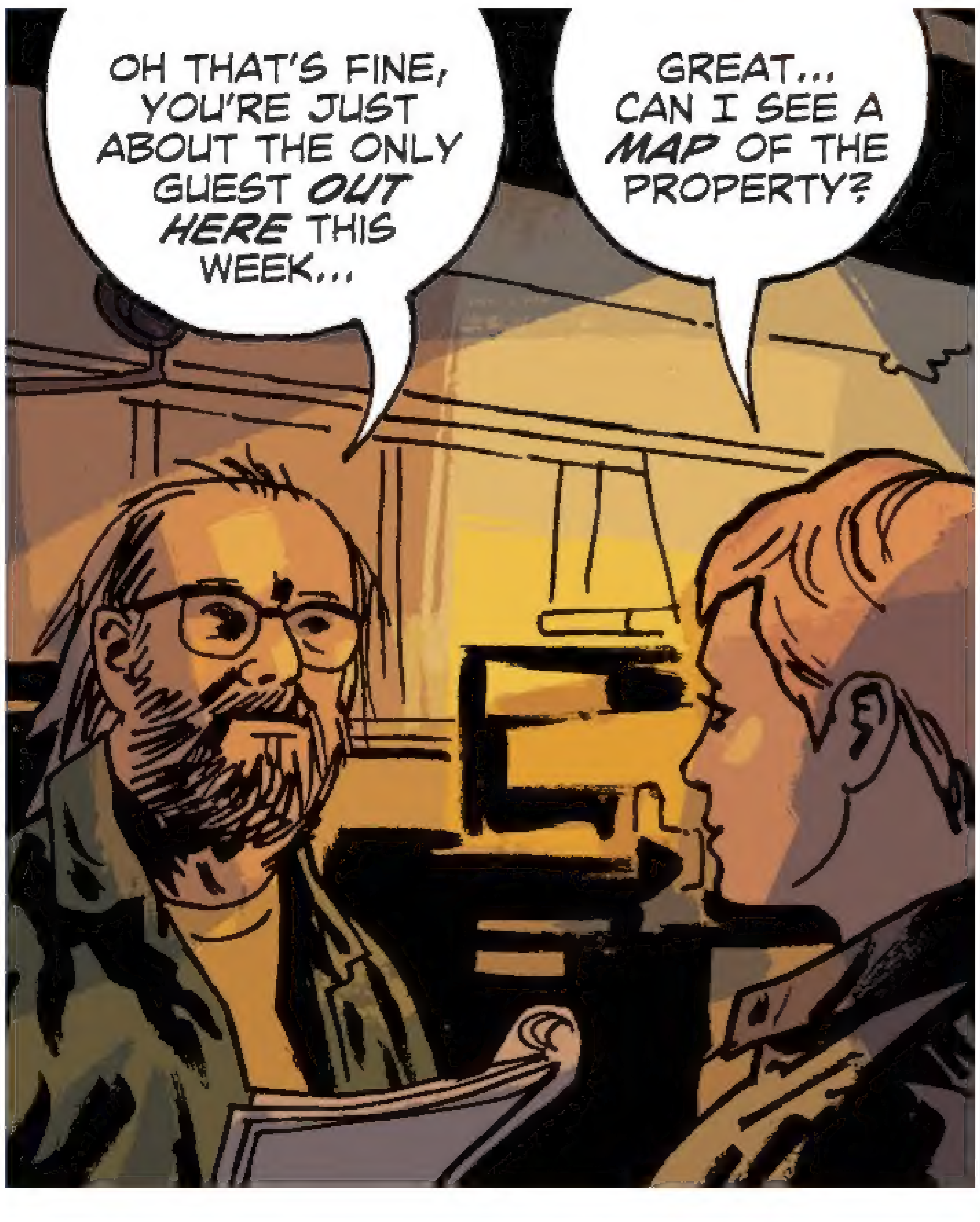
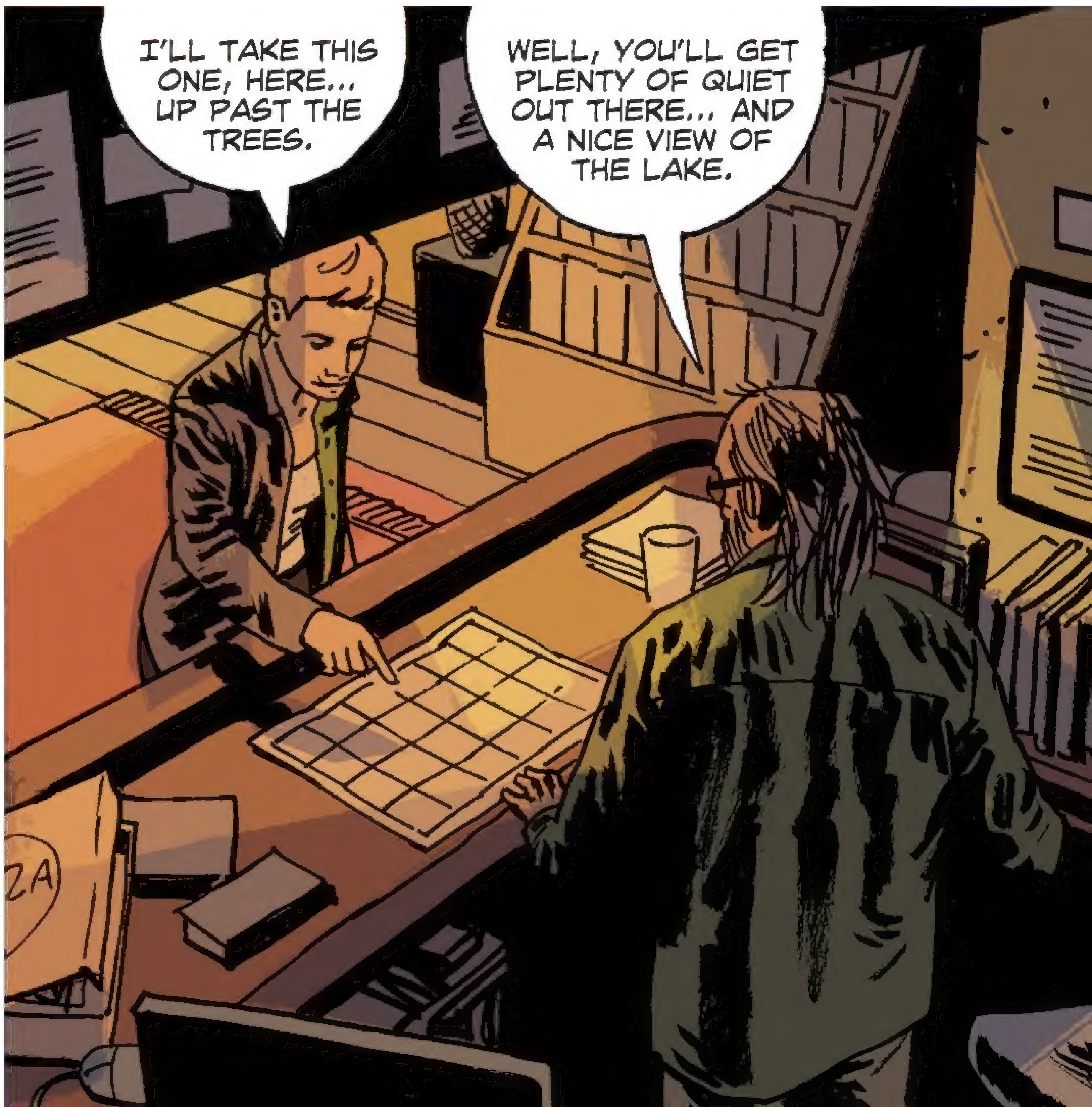

Sometimes I still dream about it.
I'm a little kid and I'm in a cave with hand-drawn symbols on the wall...
Crosses and pentagrams and unreadable words – the language of Hell?
All of it, painted in blood.


Sometimes it's tunnels, not a cave... but everything else is the same...
The adults chanting... Kneeling... Naked...
The shape moving inside the shadows, crawling towards us all...
That's when I usually wake up.
But sometimes it's later... after I feel its claws tearing into me.
LAK
LAN
CABIN
RENTA


And then I lie there and breathe for a few minutes while my heart slows down...
And I try to remember that none of that ever really happened.
FRONT OFFICE
LAKE
LAN


AFTERNOON... ARE YOU *MS JAMES?*
YEAH, THAT'S ME... SORRY FOR THE LATE ARRIVAL...
I HAD SOME *TROUBLE* ON THE ROAD.


OH THAT'S FINE, YOU'RE JUST ABOUT THE ONLY GUEST *OUT HERE* THIS WEEK...
GREAT... CAN I SEE A *MAP* OF THE PROPERTY?


I'LL TAKE THIS ONE, HERE... UP PAST THE TREES.
WELL, YOU'LL GET PLENTY OF QUIET OUT THERE... AND A NICE VIEW OF THE LAKE.

THAT'S THE IDEA...
IT'S OKAY TO PAY WITH *CASH,* RIGHT?
SURE, WE TAKE EVERYTHING BUT AMERICAN EXPRESS.
THANKS... I'M TRYING TO STOP USING MY CARDS...

ALL RIGHT... GOOD ENOUGH...

OKAY... HOPE IT WASN'T *TOO BUMPY* BACK HERE...
MMMMRRAAAA -- AAAAA -- !
YEAH... I KNOW THIS SUCKS...
C'MON, LET'S GET YOU INSIDE.
HHHHPPP -- MMMRAAA -- !
JESUS, KID, TAKE IT EASY...
DON'T MAKE ME DROP YOU.

MRRAAA -- !!
RELAX... I'M GONNA TAKE THE *GAG* OFF NOW...
BUT DON'T SCREAM OR IT GOES BACK ON.
OW -- *FUCK!*
I *MEAN* IT, NO SCREAMING.
NO ONE'LL *HEAR YOU* ANYWAY, WE'RE ON A MOUNTAIN.
WHO... WHO *ARE* YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* TO ME?
WHAT DO YOU *THINK* I'M DOING?
I DON'T KNOW. TELL ME.
I'M TAKING YOU BACK TO YOUR FAMILY.

NO! NO, YOU *TOOK ME* FROM MY FAMILY!
LET ME *GO* - *NOW!*
THOSE PEOPLE ARE *NOT* YOUR FAMILY...
THEY DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT YOU.
FUCK *YOU,* BITCH!
CRAYTON *LOVES* ALL OF US!
NO, HE DOESN'T... HE MAY HAVE YOU *BELIEVING* THAT...
BUT HE *DEFINITELY* DOESN'T LOVE *YOU.*
HE JUST SPEAKS A CERTAIN WAY... AND HE PUTS THINGS IN YOUR HEAD...
AND THEN HE TAKES WHATEVER HE *WANTS* FROM YOU.
YOU DON'T *KNOW* HIM. YOU DON'T KNOW *ANYTHING.*
NO, I DON'T KNOW CRAYTON...
I JUST KNOW HOW *EASY* IT IS TO BELIEVE *LIES.*

SO WHAT *IS* THIS? ARE YOU TRYING TO *DEPROGRAM* ME?
I DON'T THINK THAT *WORKS*, REALLY...
I'M HOPING YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO COME AROUND ON YOUR OWN...
BUT THAT'S YOUR *PARENT'S* PROBLEM, NOT MINE.
MY *PARENTS?* MY PARENTS CAN'T EVEN *SEE* THE REAL WORLD...
THEY'RE FUCKING *POD PEOPLE*...
PROGRAMMED DRONES...
WELL, I HAVEN'T MET THEM, BUT THEY SEEMED *OKAY* ON THE PHONE...
SPENT A LOT MONEY TRYING TO TRACK YOU DOWN.
ARE YOU SMOKING POT?
YEAH.

WHAT ARE YOU, A JUNKIE OR SOMETHING?
NO... I JUST SMOKE A LOT OF POT...
WHY?
THERE'S A LOT OF NOISE IN MY HEAD...
JUST LIKE THERE IS IN *YOURS*...
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN MY HEAD.
YEAH, WELL... NEITHER DO *YOU*.
Jesus Christ, do I fucking hate kids...
Well, teenagers at least...
Teenagers need to be beaten more, like they were back in my day...

That's what I'm thinking about when I find the first camera...
HEY.
How much I want to go slap that stupid kid.
OH FUCK...
GOD DAMN IT.
THAT FUCKING *CREEP.*
WHAT *IS IT?*
WHAT *HAPPENED?*

WE HAVE TO MOVE, NOW.
WHY? WHAT'S *GOING ON?*
JUST SHUT UP AND LET ME THINK...
WAIT - ARE YOU PUTTING ME *BACK* IN THE *TRUNK?*
NO NO - *PLEASE - DON'T!*
YOU CAN RIDE IN THE PASSENGER SEAT...
BUT IF YOU GIVE ME *ANY* TROUBLE...
FUCK YOU!

I go blind for a second from the pain...
...SHIT... THAT STUPID LITTLE CUNT...
But I can hear the kid running out the door...
And I know I'm fucked already...
GOD DAMN HER...
I wipe the tears away and run after her anyway.

JENNY! COME BACK!
Maybe the manager is just filming guests to beat off to later...
Maybe he wasn't watching us on a live feed...

Maybe.
But maybe is the sound of hope in your mind...
And hope is for fools.

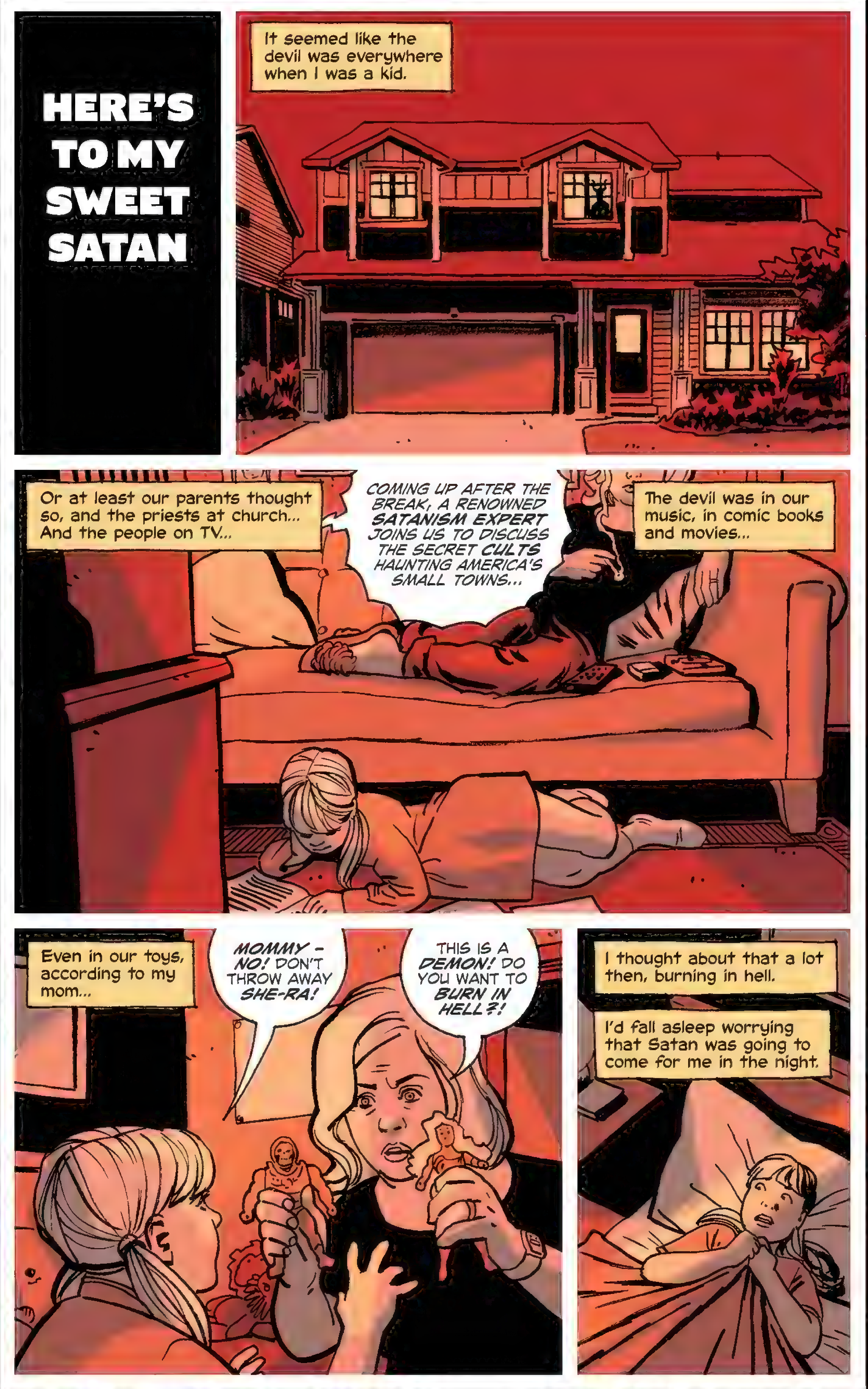
STOP RIGHT THERE, LADY!
FREEZE, BITCH!
AHH... FUCK...
DON'T YOU FUCKING *MOVE* THOSE *HANDS.*
I'M NOT...

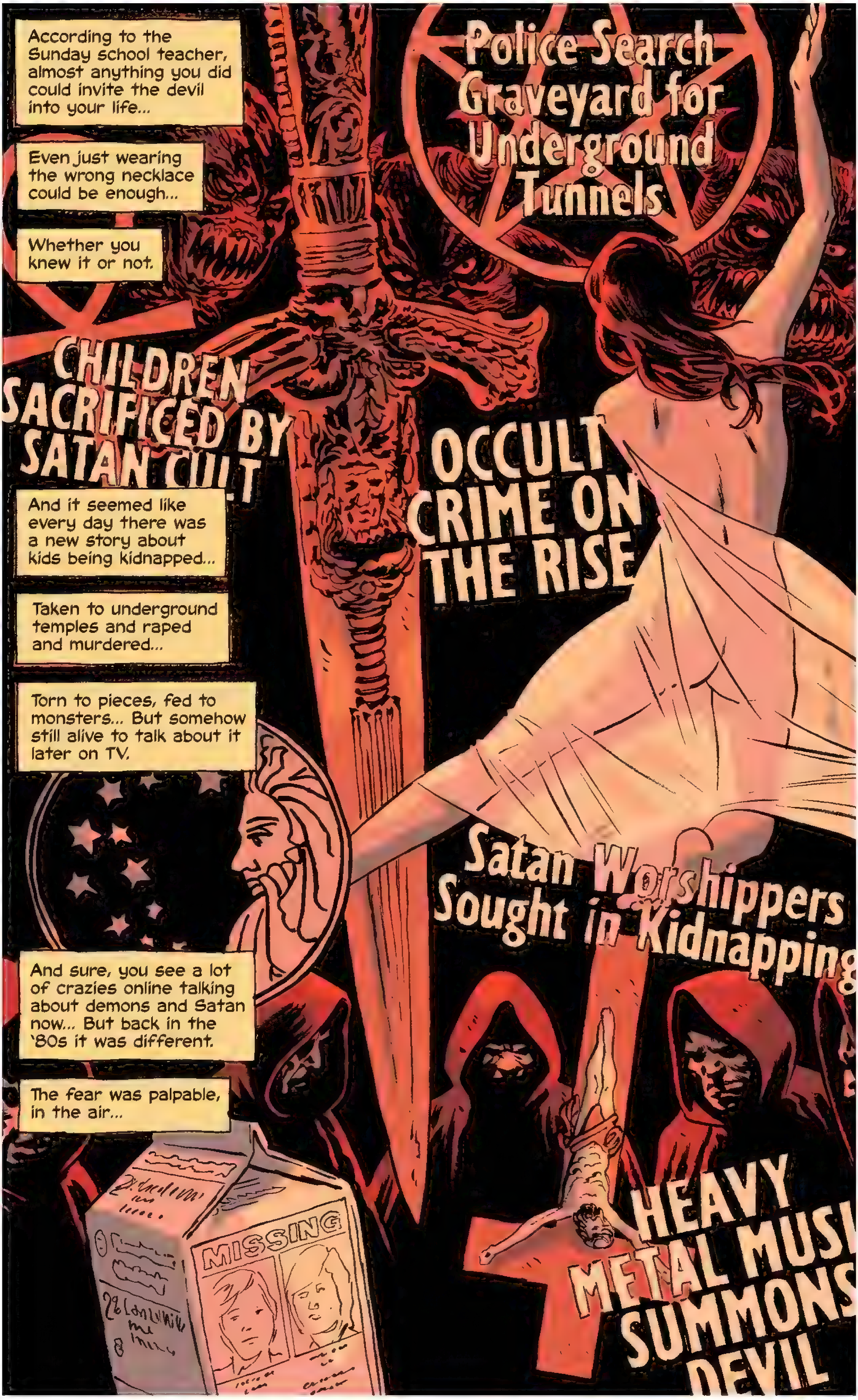
I spend the next few hours answering questions, explaining why I had a teenager in the trunk of my car...
That her parents hired me...
That I was saving her from a cult and taking her home...
But all they see is a lady with an unregistered car, a burner cell phone, and a fake driver's license...
So they run my prints... And I lose control of my life yet again.
OH *C'MON*... CAN'T YOU JUST *FINE ME* FOR THE FAKE ID?
SORRY, MA'AM... WE GOTTA *HOLD* YOU.
THERE'S SOME *IMPORTANT PEOPLE* LOOKIN' FOR YOU...
WHAT? WHAT DOES *THAT* MEAN?
I CAN'T SAY... ABOVE MY *PAY GRADE*...

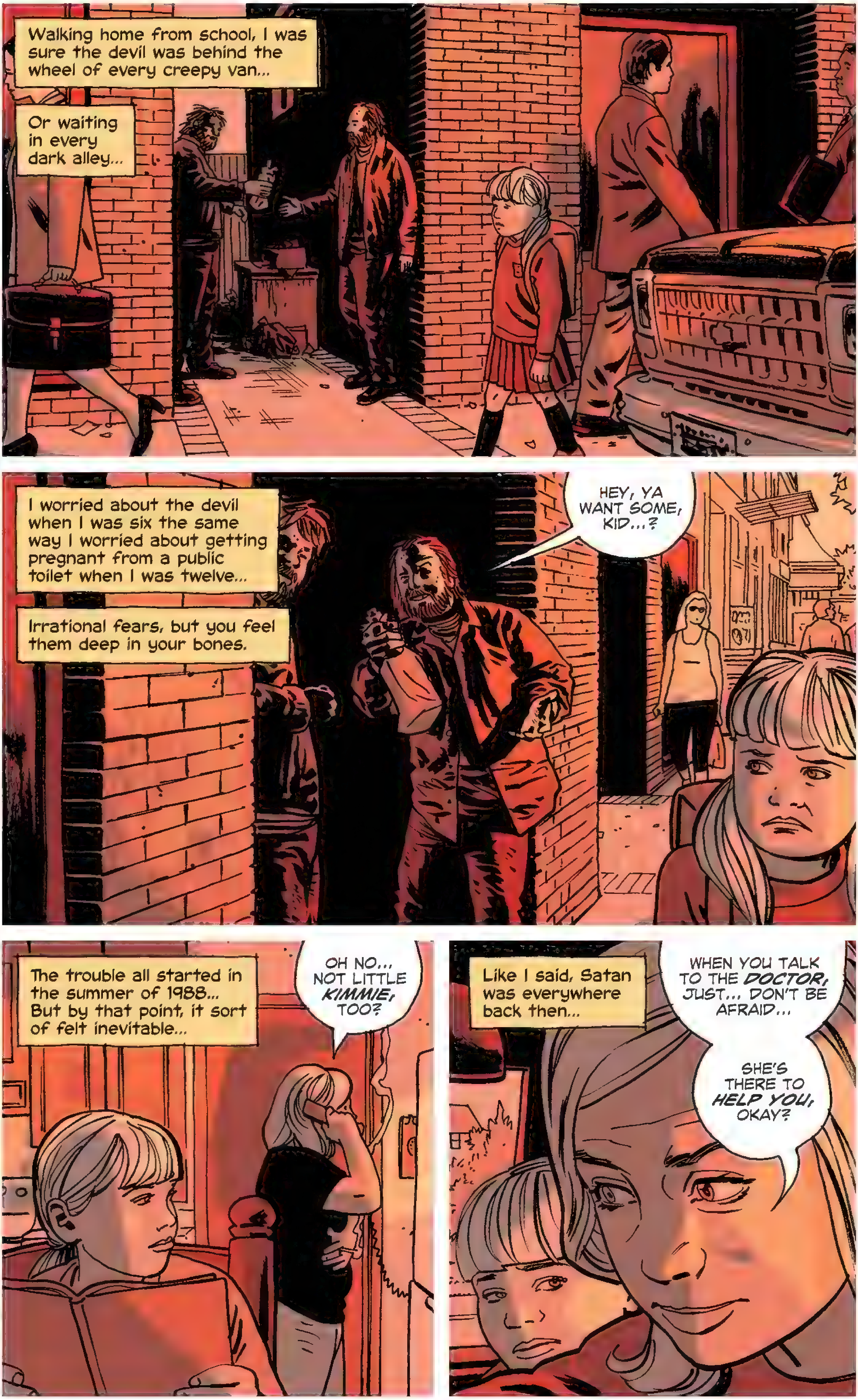
I get my answer late the next afternoon, after about twenty hours in a cell...
Just when I'm starting to go stir-crazy and plot my escape...
SORRY FOR THE DELAY... I MISSED A CONNECTION THIS MORNING...
WHAT IS THIS?
WHO *ARE* YOU?
AGENT WEST, *FBI*...
FBI
WHY IS THE *FBI* LOOKING FOR *ME?*
YOU'RE *NATALIE BURNS,* RIGHT?
FROM THE *SATANIC SIX?*
THAT'S MY *NAME,* BUT... NO ONE *CALLED US* THAT...
NOT IN REAL LIFE.
WELL, IT DOESN'T MATTER, 'CAUSE THERE'S ONLY *THREE* OF YOU NOW...
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE... TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOME *MURDERS*...

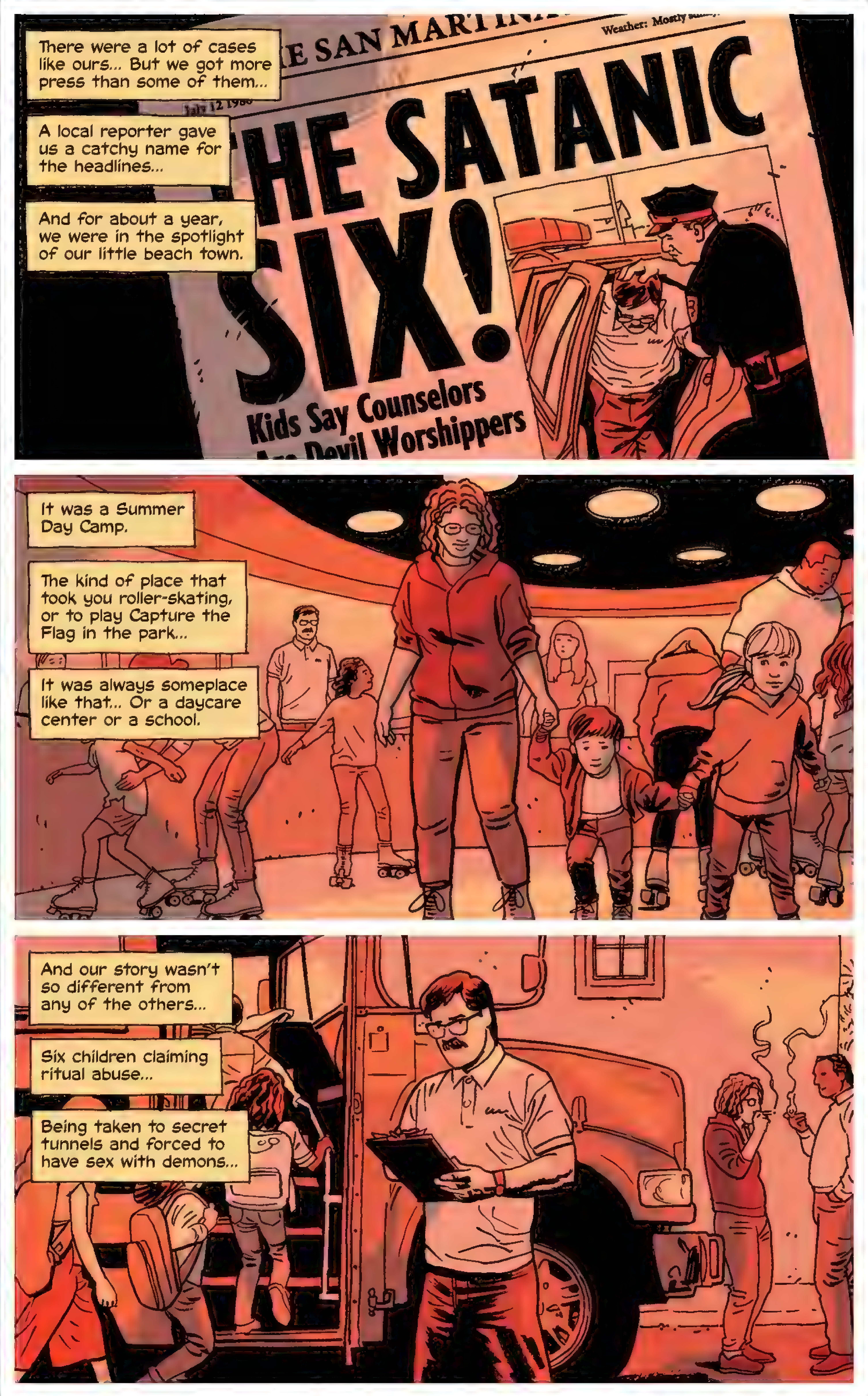
DARK
DUNGEONS
J.T.C.

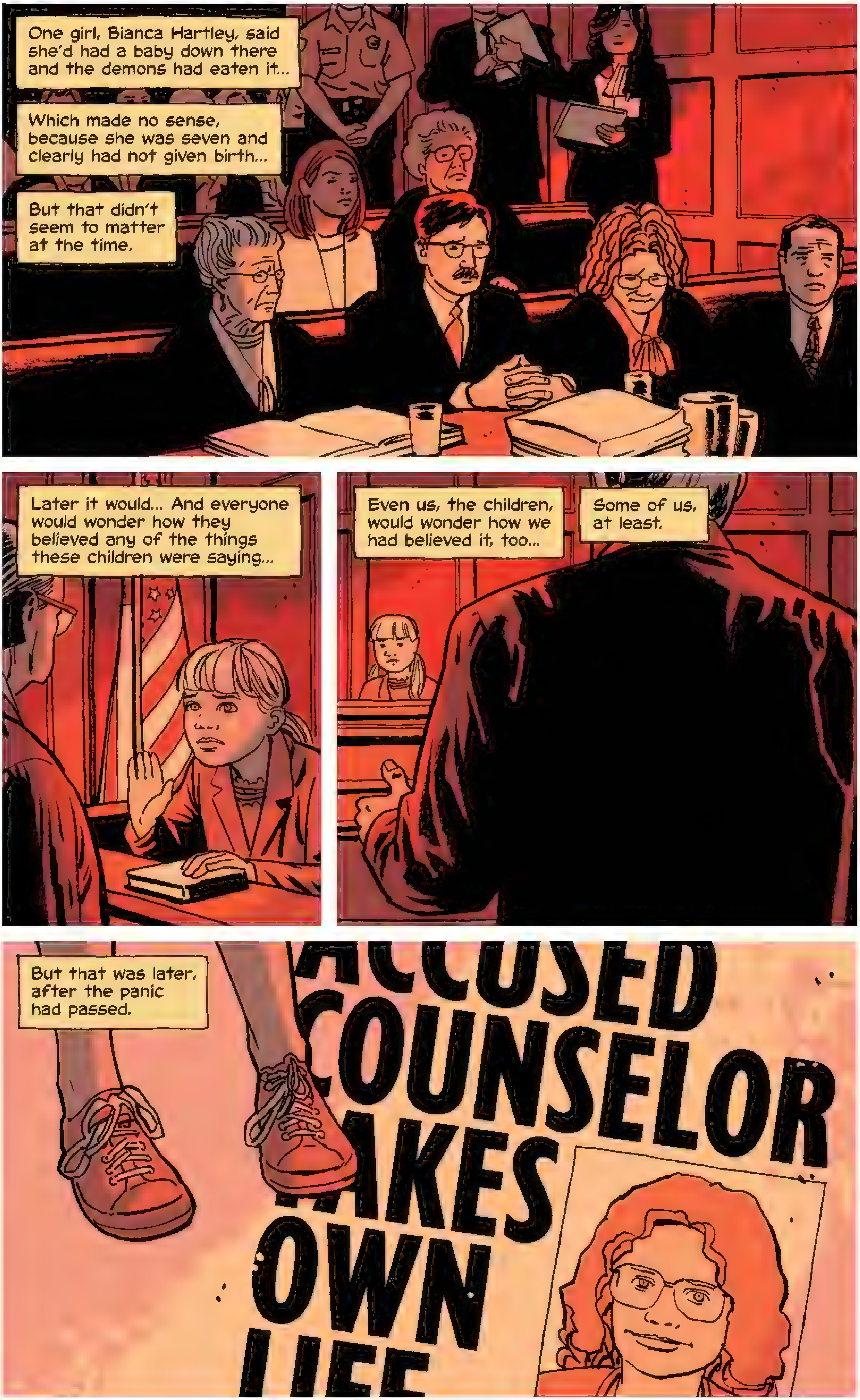
HERE'S TO MY SWEET SATAN


It seemed like the devil was everywhere when I was a kid.
Or at least our parents thought so, and the priests at church... And the people on TV...
COMING UP AFTER THE BREAK, A RENOWNED SATANISM EXPERT JOINS US TO DISCUSS THE SECRET CULTS HAUNTING AMERICA'S SMALL TOWNS...
The devil was in our music, in comic books and movies...
Even in our toys, according to my mom...
MOMMY - NO! DON'T THROW AWAY SHE-RA!
THIS IS A DEMON! DO YOU WANT TO BURN IN HELL?!
I thought about that a lot then, burning in hell.
I'd fall asleep worrying that Satan was going to come for me in the night.

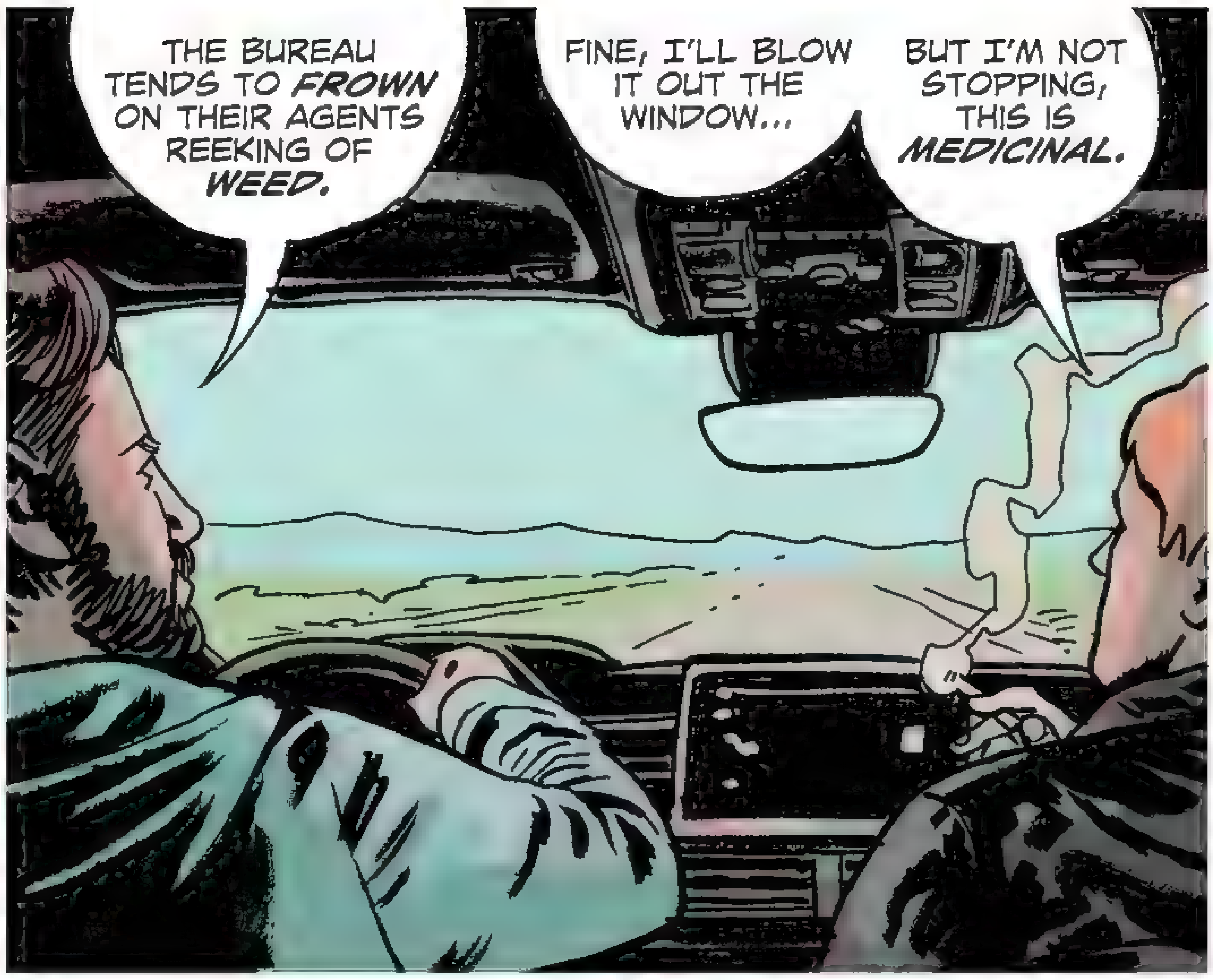

According to the Sunday school teacher, almost anything you did could invite the devil into your life...
Police Search Graveyard for Underground Tunnels
Even just wearing the wrong necklace could be enough...
Whether you knew it or not.
CHILDREN SACRIFICED BY SATAN CULT
OCCULT CRIME ON THE RISE
And it seemed like every day there was a new story about kids being kidnapped...
Taken to underground temples and raped and murdered...
Torn to pieces, fed to monsters... But somehow still alive to talk about it later on TV.
Satan Worshippers Sought in Kidnapping
And sure, you see a lot of crazies online talking about demons and Satan now... But back in the '80s it was different.
The fear was palpable, in the air...
MISSING
HEAVY METAL MUSI SUMMONS DEVIL

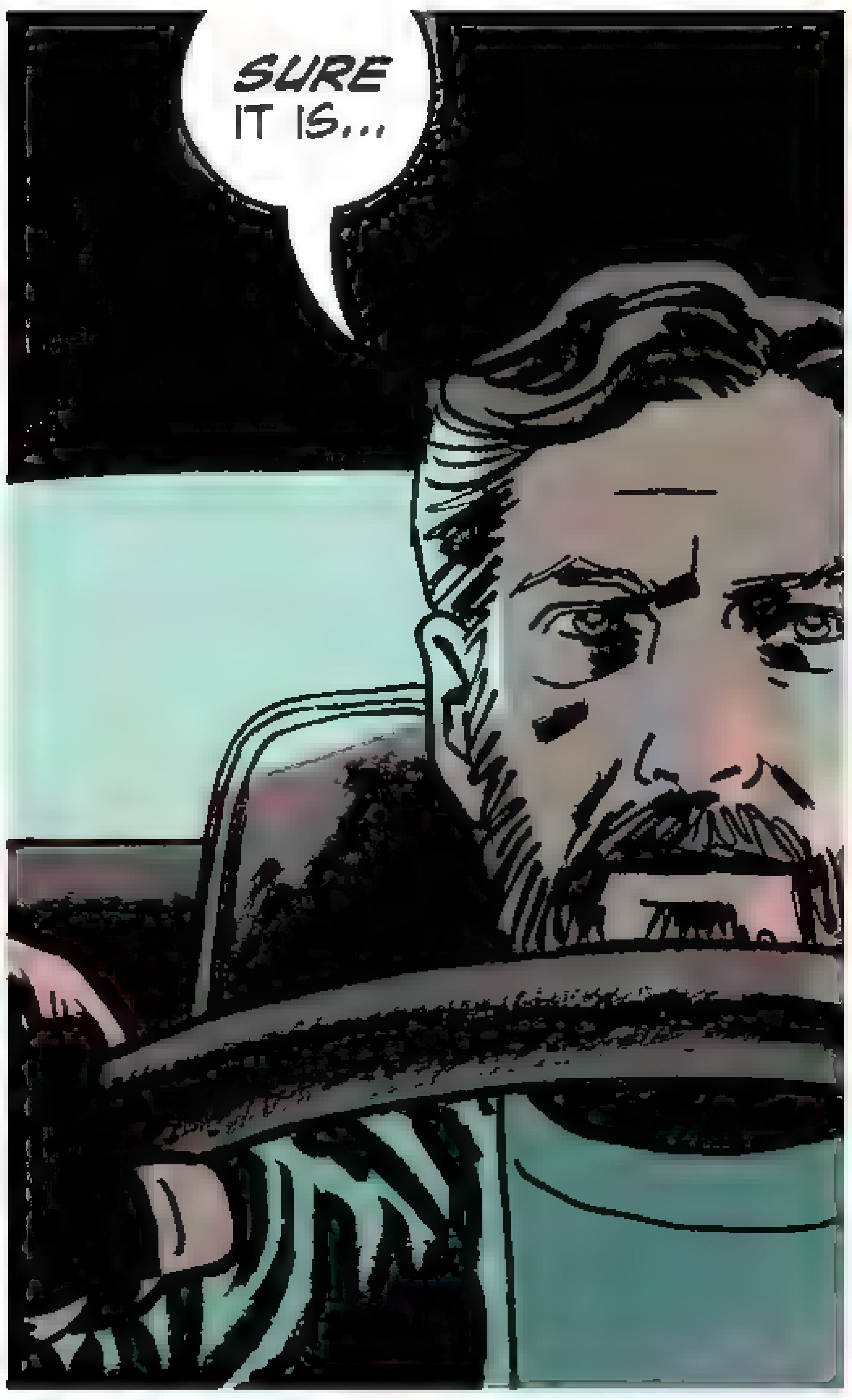

Walking home from school, I was sure the devil was behind the wheel of every creepy van...
Or waiting in every dark alley...
I worried about the devil when I was six the same way I worried about getting pregnant from a public toilet when I was twelve...
Irrational fears, but you feel them deep in your bones.
HEY, YA WANT SOME, KID...?
The trouble all started in the summer of 1988... But by that point, it sort of felt inevitable...
OH NO... NOT LITTLE *KIMMIE*, TOO?
Like I said, Satan was everywhere back then...
WHEN YOU TALK TO THE *DOCTOR*, JUST... DON'T BE AFRAID...
SHE'S THERE TO *HELP YOU*, OKAY?

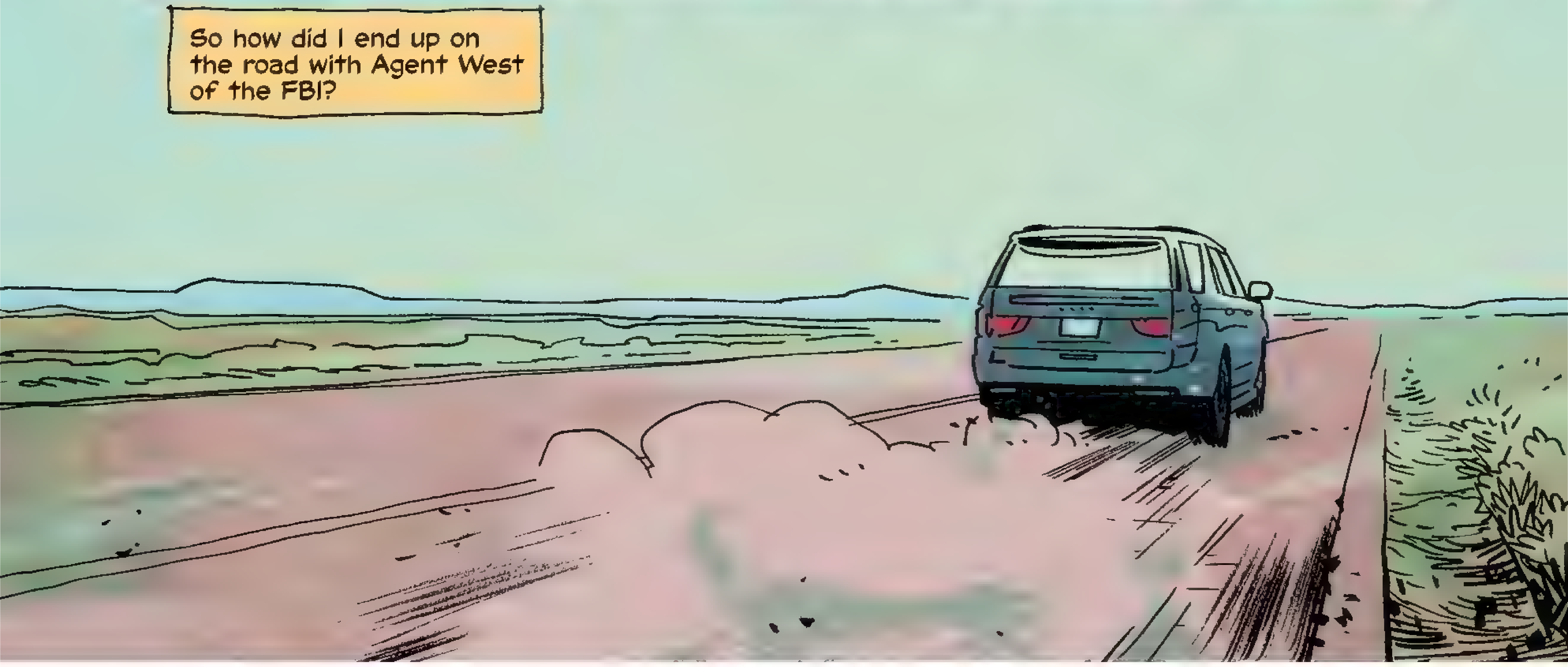

There were a lot of cases like ours... But we got more press than some of them...
A local reporter gave us a catchy name for the headlines...
And for about a year, we were in the spotlight of our little beach town.
SAN MARTIN
Weather: Mostly
HE SATANIC SIX!
Kids Say Counselors
Devil Worshippers
It was a Summer Day Camp.
The kind of place that took you roller-skating, or to play Capture the Flag in the park...
It was always someplace like that... Or a daycare center or a school.
And our story wasn't so different from any of the others...
Six children claiming ritual abuse...
Being taken to secret tunnels and forced to have sex with demons...

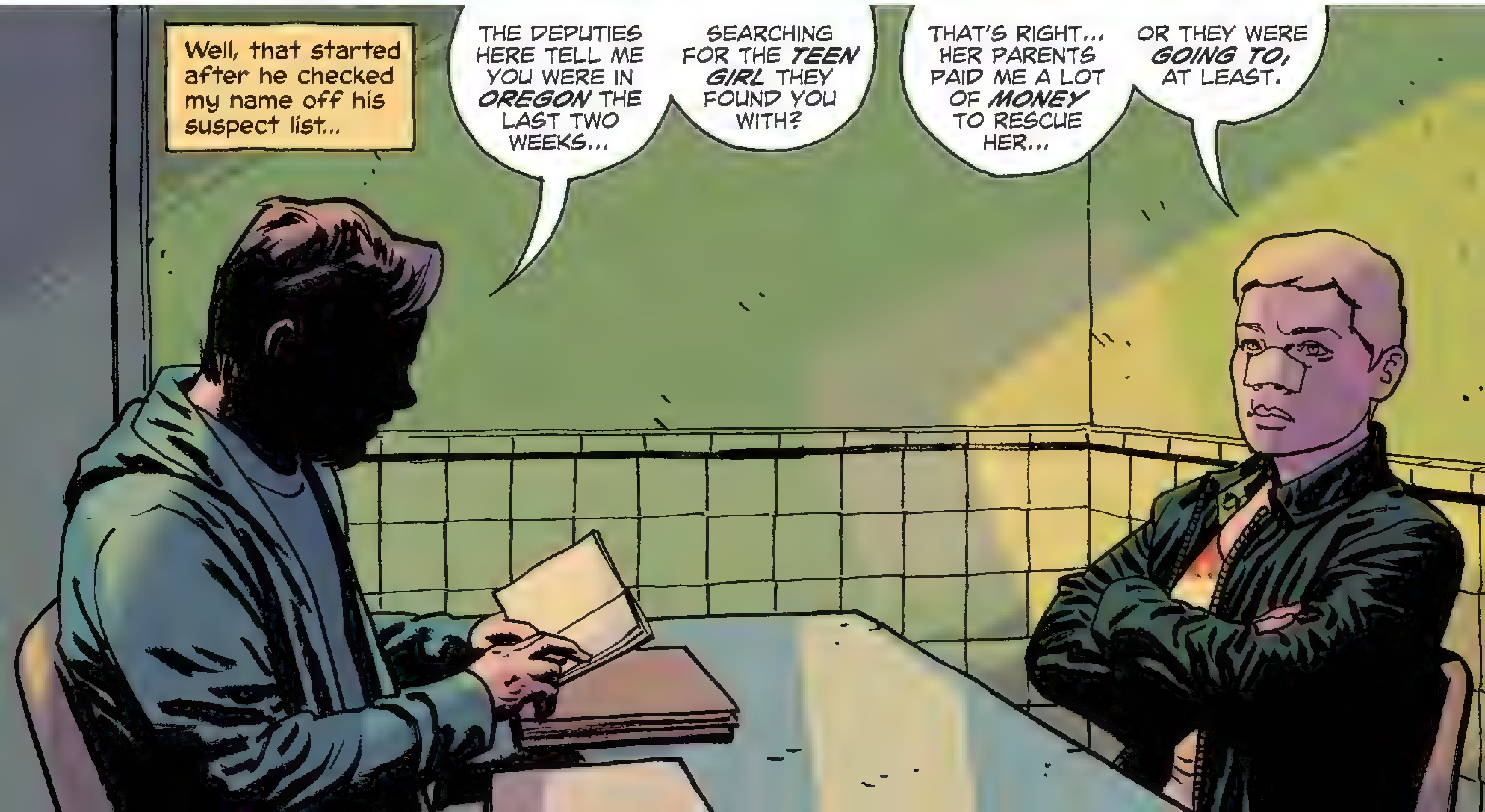

One girl, Bianca Hartley, said she'd had a baby down there and the demons had eaten it...
Which made no sense, because she was seven and clearly had not given birth...
But that didn't seem to matter at the time.
Later it would... And everyone would wonder how they believed any of the things these children were saying...
Even us, the children, would wonder how we had believed it, too...
Some of us, at least.
But that was later, after the panic had passed.
ACCUSED
COUNSELOR
AKES
OWN
LIFE

CAN YOU *NOT* SMOKE THAT IN MY CAR?
WHAT? POT'S *LEGAL* IN CALIFORNIA...
YEAH, WELL... SMOKING IT IN A MOVING VEHICLE *ISN'T.*
HEY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED ME TO COME ALONG, MAN...
AND YOU ALREADY COST ME *TEN GRAND*...
I ALSO GOT YOUR *CHARGES DROPPED*... KIDNAPPING... TRANSPORTING A *MINOR* ACROSS STATE LINES...
SO MAYBE TRY NOT TO *HOTBOX* ME HERE, OKAY?


THE BUREAU TENDS TO *FROWN* ON THEIR AGENTS REEKING OF *WEED.*
FINE, I'LL BLOW IT OUT THE WINDOW...
BUT I'M NOT STOPPING, THIS IS *MEDICINAL.*


SURE IT IS...


So how did I end up on the road with Agent West of the FBI?


Well, that started after he checked my name off his suspect list...
THE DEPUTIES HERE TELL ME YOU WERE IN *OREGON* THE LAST TWO WEEKS...
SEARCHING FOR THE *TEEN GIRL* THEY FOUND YOU WITH?
THAT'S RIGHT... HER PARENTS PAID ME A LOT OF *MONEY* TO RESCUE HER...
OR THEY WERE *GOING TO,* AT LEAST.

SO THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE A LIVING? FINDING MISSING KIDS?
YEAH... DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION.
LIKE IF IT'S CULT-RELATED, YOU MEAN?
LOOK, MISTER FBI, I CLEARLY DIDN'T DO WHATEVER YOU THOUGHT I DID...
SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST TELL ME WHO GOT MURDERED?
TIMOTHY RAMOS... DO YOU REMEMBER HIM?
OF COURSE. I REMEMBER ALL OF THEM.
Tim Ramos... I could still see him crying on the witness stand at age seven...
A scared little kid so sure he was doing the right thing when he wasn't.
WE FOUND HIS BODY IN THE FOREST A MILE FROM HIS HOME IN IDAHO...
HE'D BEEN NAILED UPSIDE DOWN TO A TREE AND... WELL...

THE EVIDENCE SHOWS HE TOOK A *LONG TIME* TO DIE...
AND THAT THERE WERE *OTHERS* THERE, WHO WATCHED IT HAPPEN...
LIKE A *SATANIC RITUAL?*
IS *THAT* WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
BECAUSE THAT'S NOT A REAL THING... YOU *KNOW* THAT, RIGHT?
WE WERE JUST *STUPID KIDS* REPEATING FANTASIES...
YEAH... I KNOW ABOUT YOUR CASE AND *ALL* THE OTHERS, NATALIE.
BUT I ALSO KNOW THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO BELIEVE IN *ALL SORTS* OF INSANITY...
PEOPLE WHO *WANT* THE DEVIL TO BE REAL...
AND WHO *DO THINGS* LIKE WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FRIEND *TIMOTHY RAMOS.*
HE WASN'T MY FRIEND...
JUST SOME *KID* I KNEW FOREVER AGO.

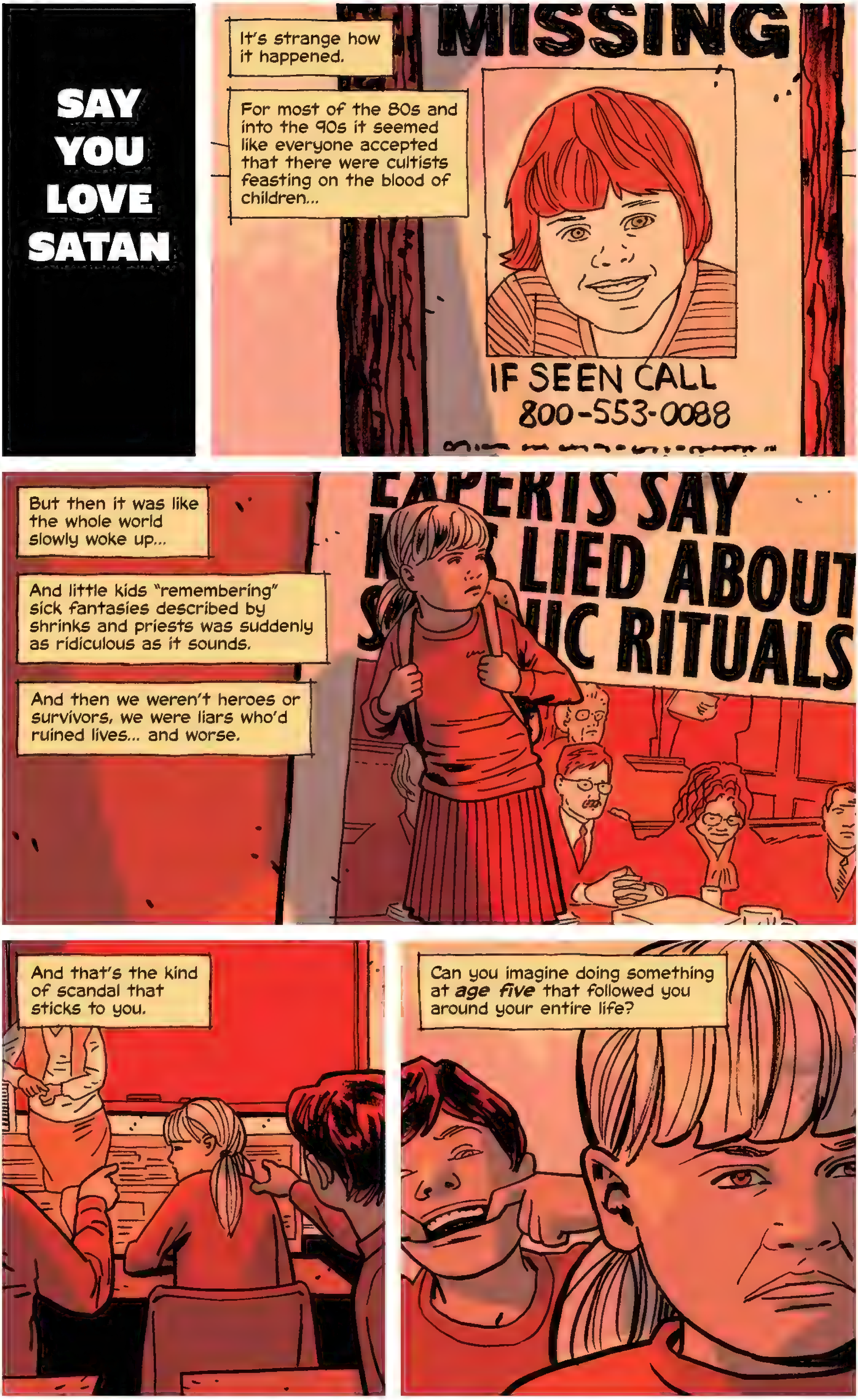
SO WHO *ELSE* IS DEAD?
YOU SAID THERE WERE ONLY *THREE* OF US LEFT NOW.
YEAH... THE OTHER TWO AREN'T AS *CLEAR-CUT*...
BUT WITH THE RAMOS *MURDER*, WE'VE TAKEN A *HARDER* LOOK AT THEM.
TRACY WEBBER, DIED IN A *HOUSE FIRE* ABOUT A YEAR AGO... RULED AN *ACCIDENT* AT THE TIME...
AND BLAKE SNYDER, WHO WAS ONLY IDENTIFIED FROM *DENTAL* RECORDS...
HIS CORPSE WAS FOUND IN AN ABANDONED CHURCH IN MEXICO... AFTER *ANIMALS* HAD GOTTEN TO IT.
JESUS...
OKAY... SO YOUR THEORY IS... *WHAT?*
SOMEONE'S PICKING US OFF? AFTER *THIRTY-SOMETHING* YEARS?

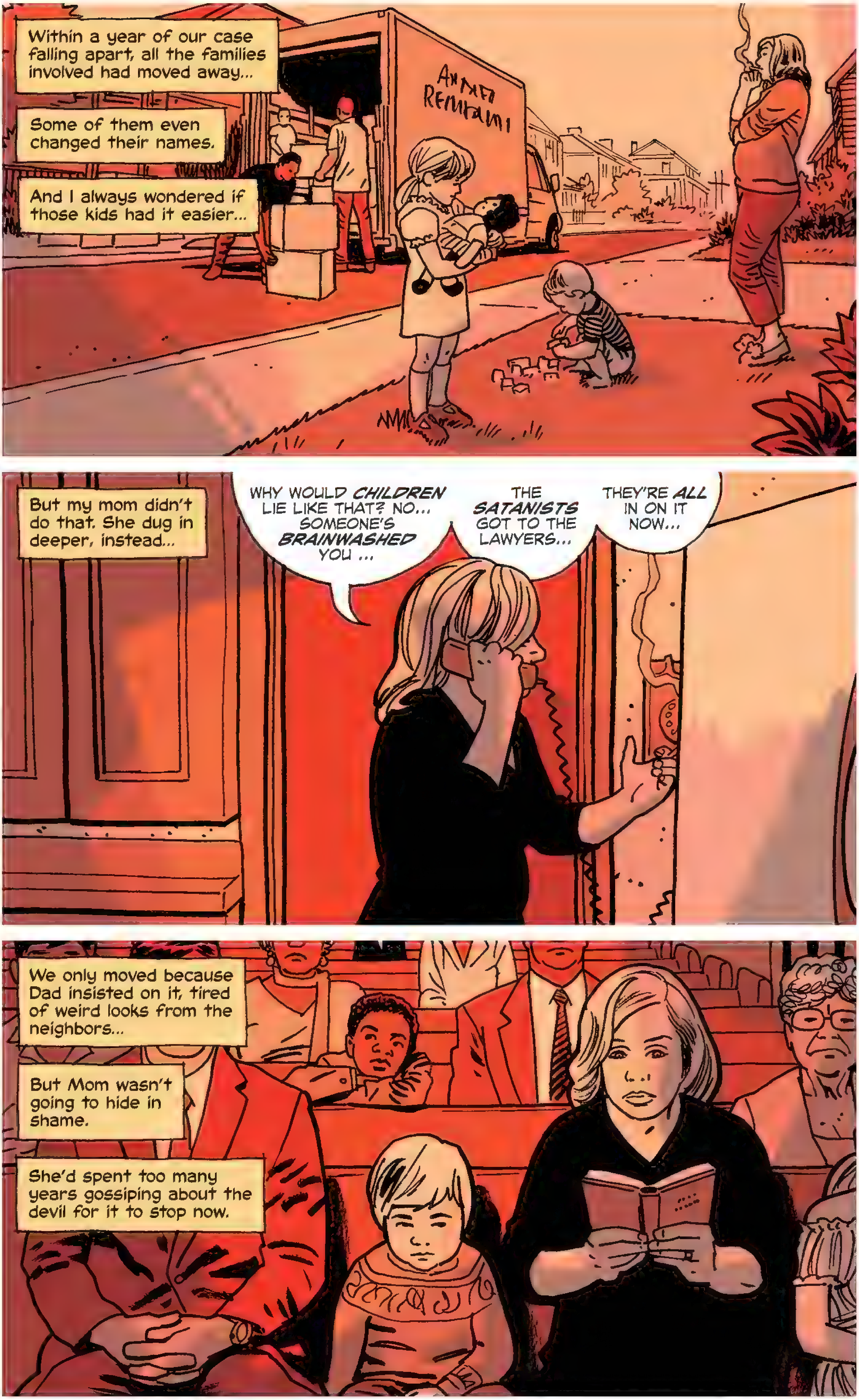
THREE OF YOU DYING OVER A FEW YEARS WOULD BE AN ODD *COINCIDENCE* ON ITS OWN...
BUT TIMOTHY RAMOS'S *MURDER* BEING STAGED LIKE A *SATANIC SACRIFICE?*
YEAH, THAT MAKES ME THINK SOMEONE'S *TARGETING* YOUR GROUP.
MAYBE SOMEONE *CONNECTED* TO THE CASE...
MAYBE SOME *NUT* FROM THE *INTERNET*...
ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS, YOU'RE *NOT SAFE* RIGHT NOW.
So we made a deal... I'd go with him to find the last two members of the *"Satanic Six"* and he'd get my charges dropped.
That way he could keep an eye on me...
Make sure I didn't get crucified or burned alive right after he drove away.

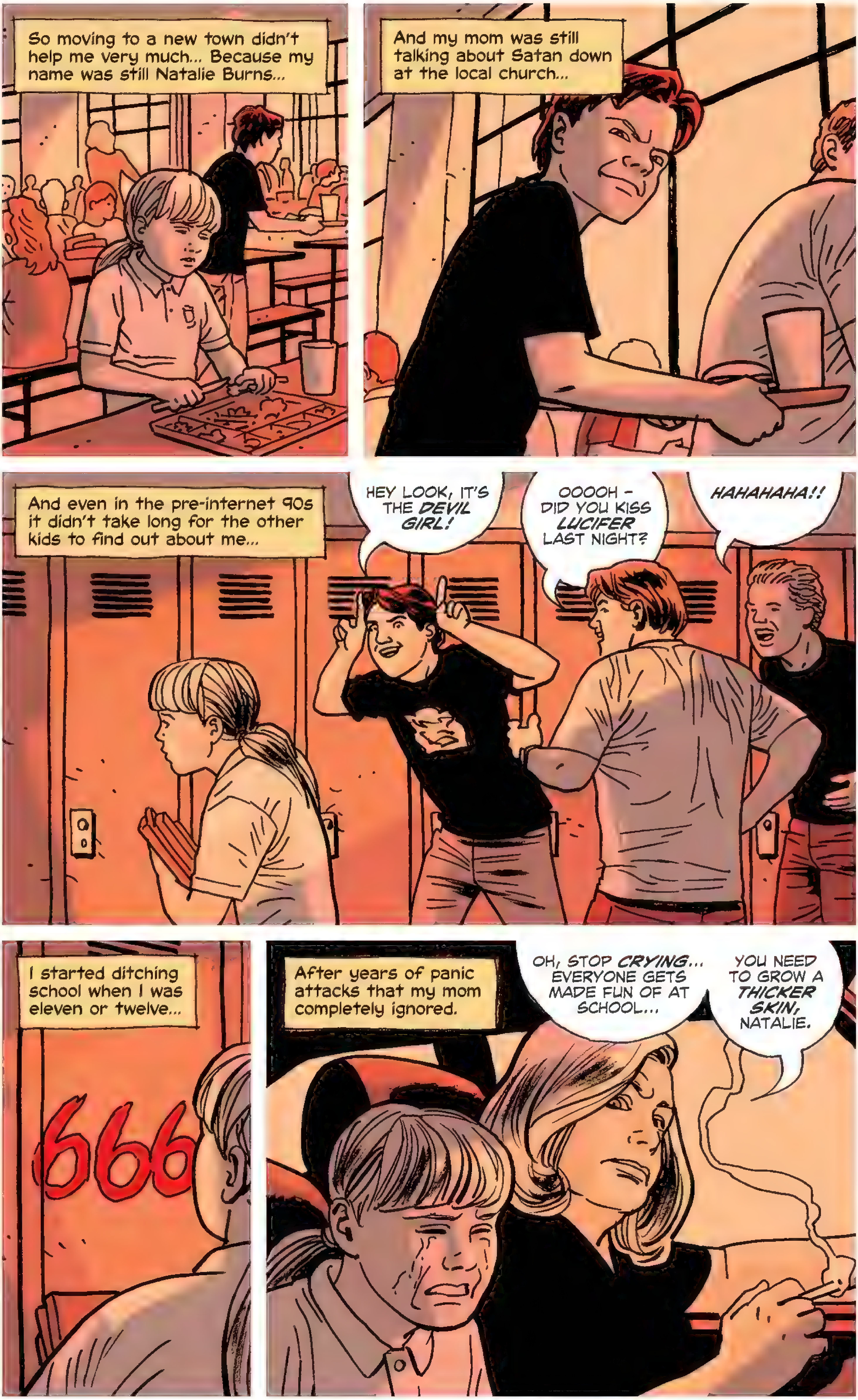
And since I was a trained investigator with lifelong knowledge of the case...
Who knows, maybe I'd even be able to help him?
COME ON, LET'S GET BACK TO IT...
WE CAN FIND A MOTEL UP THE ROAD IN A FEW HOURS.
Though I wasn't feeling very helpful.
NATALIE?
HEY, YOU *WITH ME* HERE?
IT *NEVER* ENDS...
NO MATTER WHAT I DO...
IT NEVER GOES AWAY...

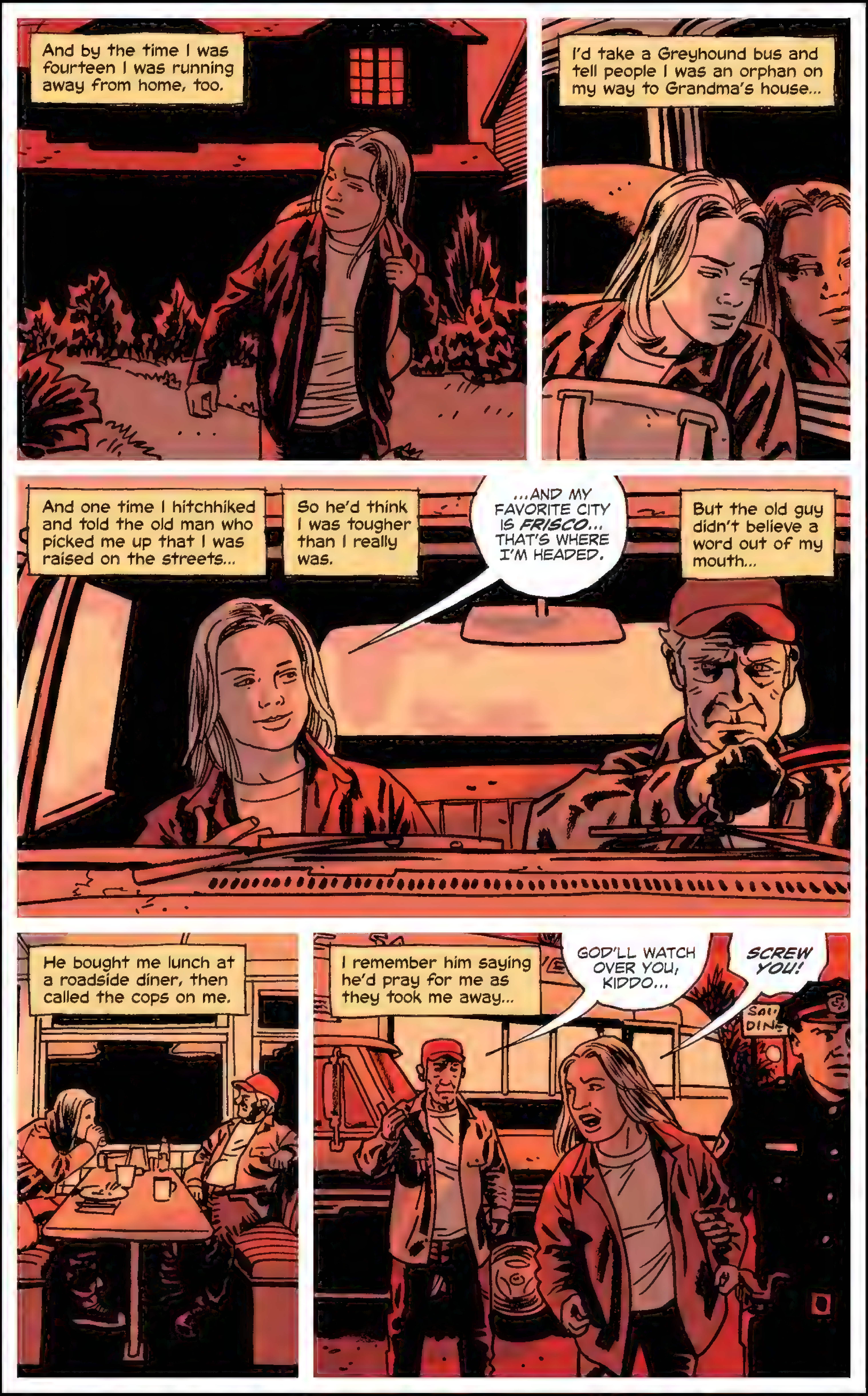
DO YOU KNOW HOW THAT *FEELS*...?
NOT EXACTLY... I HAVE *REGRETS*... PAST MISTAKES, SURE...
BUT NOTHING LIKE WHAT *YOU'RE* GOING THROUGH RIGHT NOW, I IMAGINE.
AIR
IT'S LIKE... YOU THINK YOU CAN *MOVE ON* AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE...
BUT IT'S ALL STILL THERE... EVERYTHING YOU EVER DID...
JUST WAITING FOR YOU...
YEAH, I GET THAT.
MAYBE... UH... EASE BACK ON THE *POT* FOR A WHILE?
NO...
FUCK THAT.

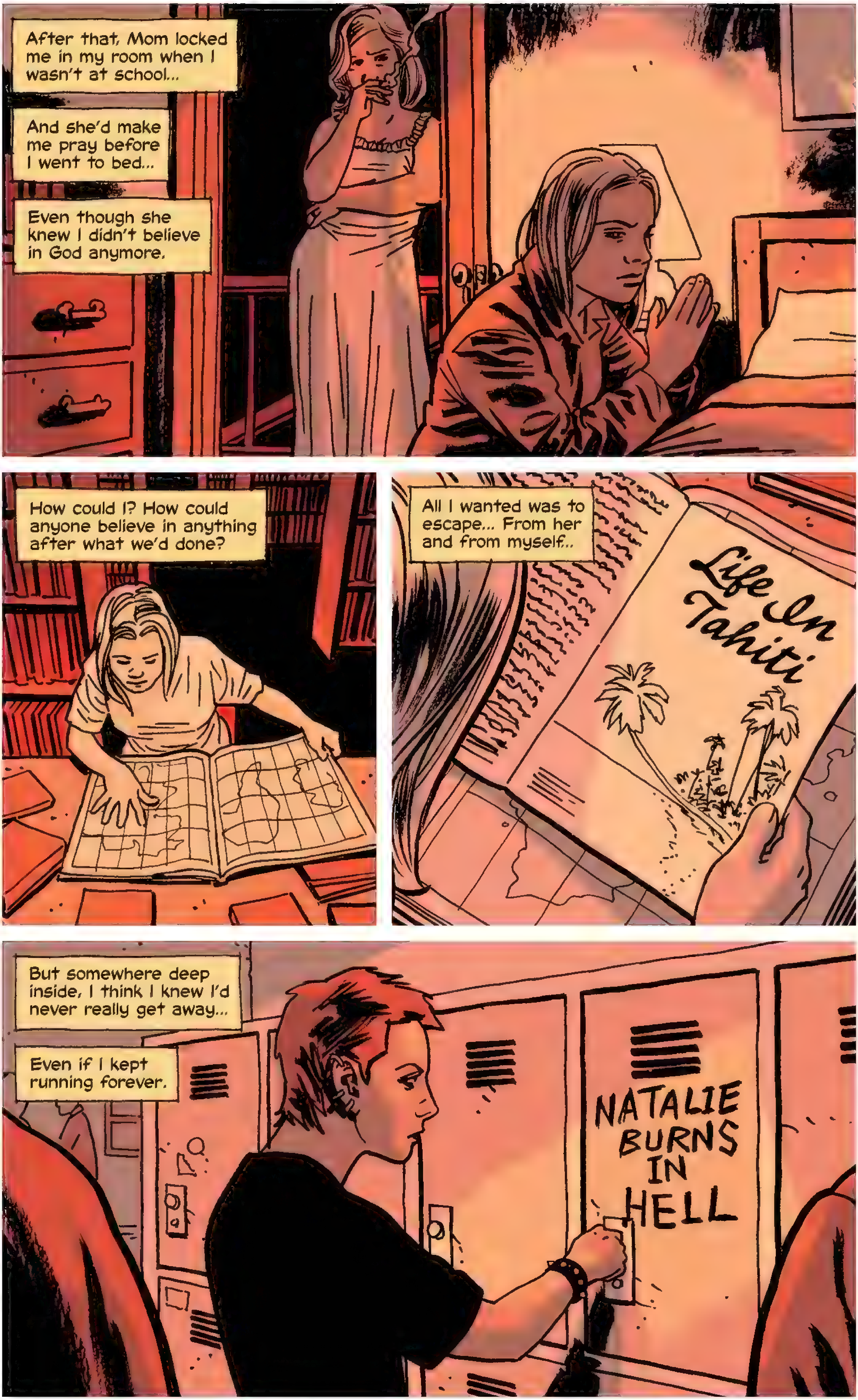
SAY YOU LOVE SATAN


It's strange how it happened.
For most of the 80s and into the 90s it seemed like everyone accepted that there were cultists feasting on the blood of children...
MISSING
IF SEEN CALL 800-553-0088
But then it was like the whole world slowly woke up...
And little kids "remembering" sick fantasies described by shrinks and priests was suddenly as ridiculous as it sounds.
And then we weren't heroes or survivors, we were liars who'd ruined lives... and worse.
EXPERTS SAY
K LIED ABOUT
S IC RITUALS
And that's the kind of scandal that sticks to you.
Can you imagine doing something at *age five* that followed you around your entire life?


Within a year of our case falling apart, all the families involved had moved away...
Some of them even changed their names.
And I always wondered if those kids had it easier...
But my mom didn't do that. She dug in deeper, instead...
WHY WOULD *CHILDREN* LIE LIKE THAT? NO... SOMEONE'S *BRAINWASHED* YOU ...
THE *SATANISTS* GOT TO THE LAWYERS...
THEY'RE *ALL* IN ON IT NOW...
We only moved because Dad insisted on it, tired of weird looks from the neighbors...
But Mom wasn't going to hide in shame.
She'd spent too many years gossiping about the devil for it to stop now.


So moving to a new town didn't help me very much... Because my name was still Natalie Burns...
And my mom was still talking about Satan down at the local church...
And even in the pre-internet 90s it didn't take long for the other kids to find out about me...
HEY LOOK, IT'S THE *DEVIL GIRL!*
OOOOH - DID YOU KISS *LUCIFER* LAST NIGHT?
HAHAHAHA!!
I started ditching school when I was eleven or twelve...
666
After years of panic attacks that my mom completely ignored.
OH, STOP *CRYING*... EVERYONE GETS MADE FUN OF AT SCHOOL...
YOU NEED TO GROW A *THICKER SKIN,* NATALIE.


And by the time I was fourteen I was running away from home, too.
I'd take a Greyhound bus and tell people I was an orphan on my way to Grandma's house...
And one time I hitchhiked and told the old man who picked me up that I was raised on the streets...
So he'd think I was tougher than I really was.
...AND MY FAVORITE CITY IS *FRISCO*... THAT'S WHERE I'M HEADED.
But the old guy didn't believe a word out of my mouth...
He bought me lunch at a roadside diner, then called the cops on me.
I remember him saying he'd pray for me as they took me away...
GOD'LL WATCH OVER YOU, KIDDO...
SCREW YOU!


After that, Mom locked me in my room when I wasn't at school...
And she'd make me pray before I went to bed...
Even though she knew I didn't believe in God anymore.
How could I? How could anyone believe in anything after what we'd done?
All I wanted was to escape... From her and from myself...
Life In Tahiti
But somewhere deep inside, I think I knew I'd never really get away...
Even if I kept running forever.
NATALIE BURNS IN HELL

ROAD FLOODED
DETOUR
The roads are all flooded the next day, so it takes us forever to drive south.
We have to go east and wind down through a bunch of nowhere towns on old county highways...
The kind of places where motels still advertise Cable TV and Air Conditioning.
Like time hasn't passed at all.
...SO OUR NEXT STOP IS *KIM DENBY*... ANY CHANCE YOU TWO KEPT IN TOUCH...?
OH *YEAH*... THE WHOLE GROUP SENDS AROUND *CHRISTMAS CARDS* EVERY YEAR...
NO, WE *DIDN'T* KEEP IN TOUCH.

I NEVER WANTED TO SEE ANY OF THOSE KIDS *EVER* AGAIN...
AND I'M SURE THEY ALL FELT *EXACTLY* THE SAME WAY.
I DON'T KNOW... SOMETIMES IT HELPS, HAVING SOMEONE WHO *KNOWS* WHAT YOU *WENT THROUGH.*
MAYBE FOR *YOU*...
I'VE *NEVER* FOUND THAT TO BE THE CASE...
WELL... I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
KIM WAS MY BEST FRIEND BACK THEN... SO OUR *MOMS* STILL TALKED FOR A WHILE...
I THINK KIM BECAME A *LAWYER,* LAST I HEARD.

YEAH... SHE'S A **PARTNER** AT A SMALL FIRM...
GOES BY ***KIM MASTERSON*** NOW... MARRIED NAME.
HUNH... MARRIED ***AND*** A LAWYER... GOOD FOR KIM...
I tried to picture Kim's life... A working wife in some suburban city...
And it felt as foreign to me as life on another planet.
My own relationship history was a mess.
Really, there was barely enough to even call it a history.
Most guys in high school didn't want to go out with the ***devil girl***...
And the ones that did usually turned out to be creeps.

My longest relationship was just over a year, because that's how long it took him to find out about my past.
To be fair, the guy, Thomas, tried to be understanding and cool about it...
But I could see questions behind his eyes...
And I knew he'd ask them eventually.
IT WASN'T *YOUR* FAULT, YOU KNOW... YOU WERE JUST *CHILDREN*...
I KNOW THAT.
I WAS AT THE ACADEMY THEN AND I *REMEMBER* THAT TIME...
WE ALWAYS HAD *SPECIALISTS* COMING IN TO GIVE LECTURES ABOUT RITUAL ABUSE...
YOU KNOW SOMETHING LIKE *FIFTY PERCENT* OF SHRINKS BACK THEN SAID THEY HAD PATIENTS WITH *REPRESSED MEMORIES?*
HOW DID WE LOOK AT A *STATISTIC* LIKE THAT AND NOT THINK *SOMETHING* WAS WRONG?
I DON'T KNOW... MASS HYSTERIA?

OR MAYBE WHEN YOU'RE SENDING PEOPLE TO PRISON OVER *LIES,* IT'S HARDER TO *SEE* THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE DOING...
MAYBE.
YEAH... *MAYBE.*
FROM THE *LAW ENFORCEMENT* SIDE, LIKE I SAID, WE SEE THE WORST IN PEOPLE EVERY DAY...
AND THE KIND OF THINGS YOU AND ALL THOSE *OTHER KIDS* SAID HAPPENED TO YOU?
THAT REALLY *DOES* HAPPEN SOMETIMES.
SURE, THERE'S A LOT OF FUCKED UP PEOPLE OUT THERE...
BUT THERE WAS NO *ORGANIZED NETWORK* ACROSS THE COUNTRY *ABUSING KIDS...*
I MEAN, UNLESS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT *THE CHURCH.*

FUNNY HOW IT'S ALWAYS LIKE THAT... WHATEVER THE CONSPIRACY THEORY IS...
SOMEONE'S ACTUALLY DOING ***SOMETHING*** JUST LIKE IT...
JUST NOT THE ONES WHO'RE BEING ***ACCUSED***...
IT'S LIKE... THE WORLD IS BACKWARDS...
WELL... MY POINT IS, ***YOU*** SHOULDN'T BE CARRYING ANY OF THIS...
YOU WERE A KID, CAUGHT UP IN A ***MOMENT,*** THAT'S ALL.
YEAH, I ***KNOW***... MY SHRINK TOLD ME THE SAME THING A MILLION TIMES.
BUT SOMEHOW THAT DOESN'T ***HELP*** AT ALL.

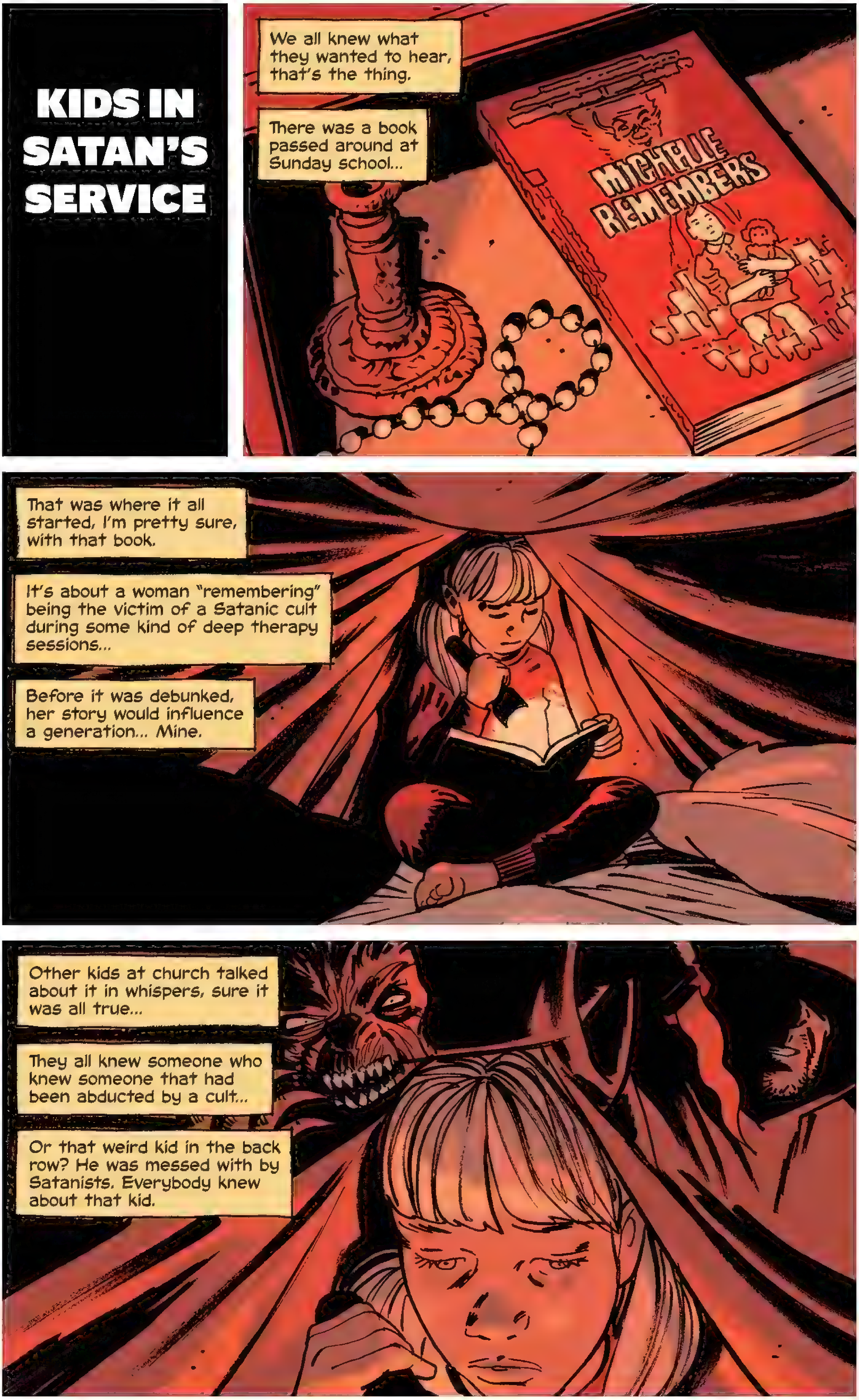
Agent West gives up trying to bond with me or whatever he thinks he's doing and we drive the rest of the way in silence...
Except for the radio hits of the 70s and 80s...
And my mind drifts back to what I said a minute ago, about the people who went to prison...
I can't remember how many there were anymore... I used to know...
But I think about the ones that I always think about...
The kind-looking nurse in New Jersey who dozens of children made up stories about...
The sheriff in Washington who imagined horrific acts of abuse and demonic possession and then confessed to them...
"I must've done something or why would those thoughts be in my head?" he said from his prison cell.
And Grace... the counselor who held my hand while I learned to roller-skate...
I always think about Grace.

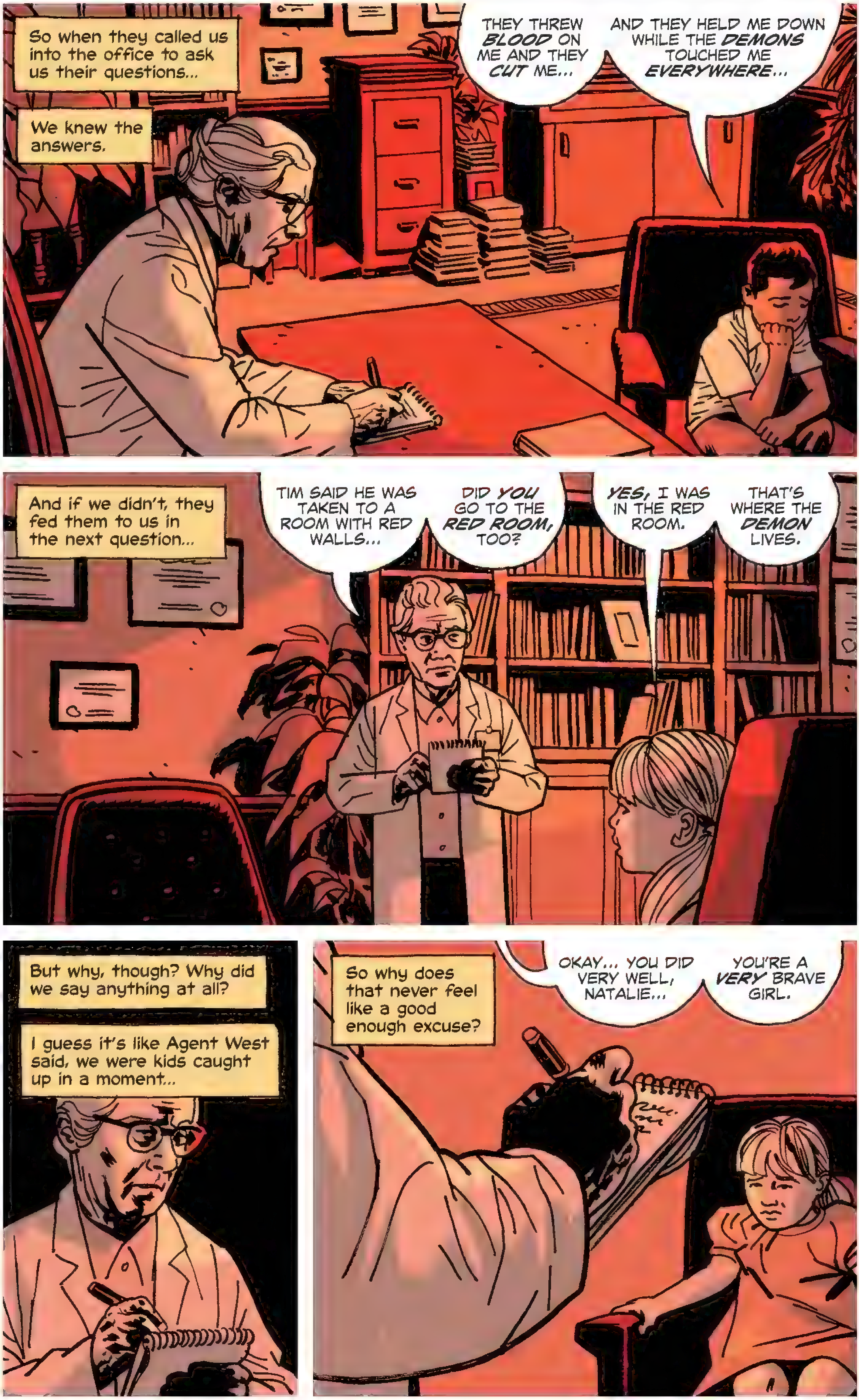
When we get to Centerville an hour later...
We find Kim Denby, just coming home from work...
And for a second I wonder if she still thinks about Grace sometimes, too...
EXCUSE ME, *MRS MASTERSON?*
I'M AGENT WEST, FROM THE FBI...
THE FBI...?
But I doubt it... She seems pretty well adjusted actually...
I NEED TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT THE CASE YOU WERE *INVOLVED WITH,* AS A CHILD.
OH... UM, OKAY, I GUESS...
BUT... THAT WAS A *LONG* TIME AGO...

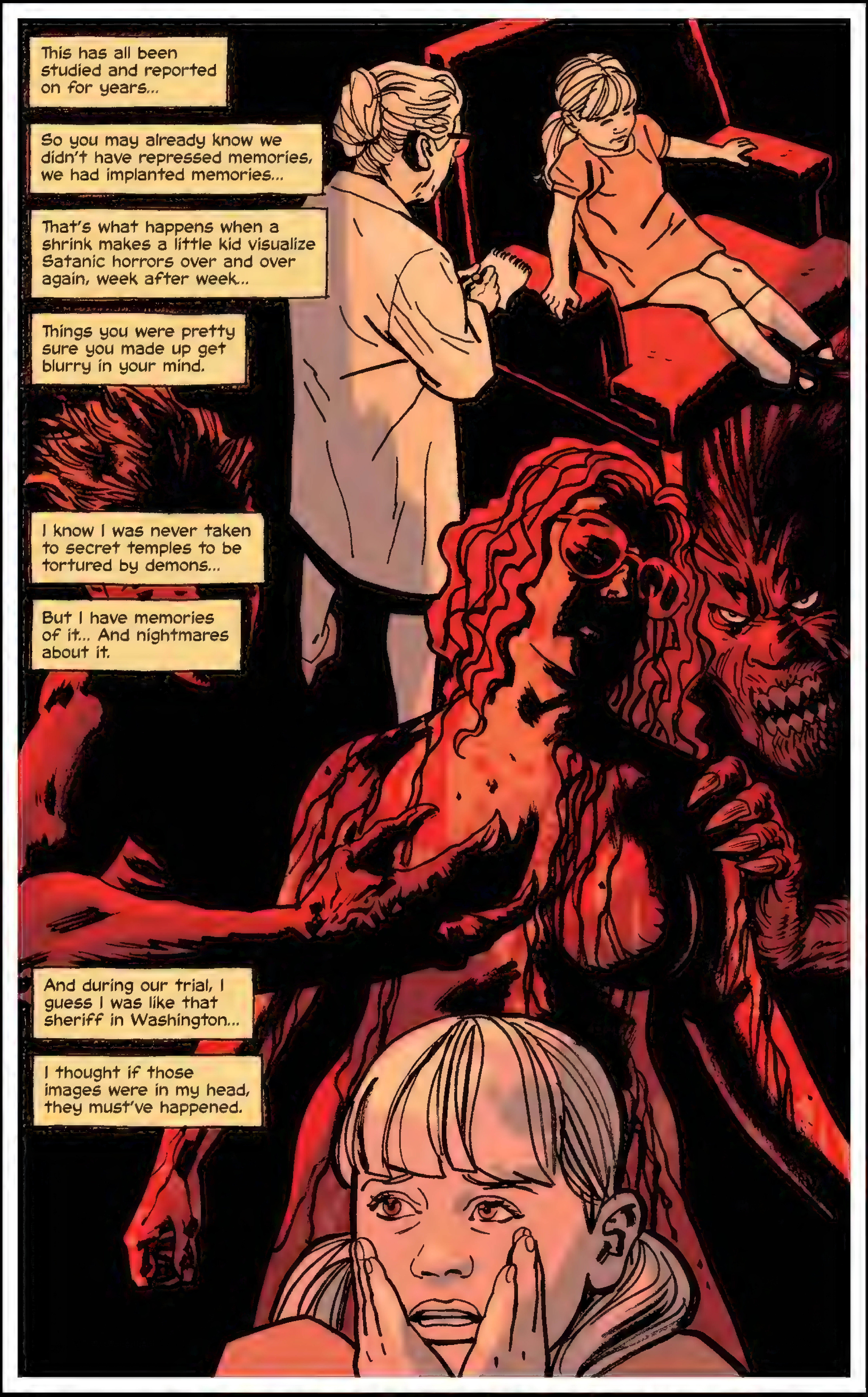
I KNOW, AND I'M *SORRY*... BUT THERE'S SOME *DANGER*... TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY...
PERHAPS WE COULD GO *INSIDE* TO TALK ABOUT THIS?
YES... OF COURSE...
COME RIGHT IN...
YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER YOUR OLD FRIEND *NATALIE*... SHE'S BEEN TRAVELLING WITH ME.
YEAH, HE'S GOT ME IN *"PROTECTIVE CUSTODY"* OR SOMETHING...
HEY KIM. LONG TIME, NO SEE.
NATALIE...?
NATALIE BURNS?
YEAH... IN THE FLESH.
WOW... I BARELY *RECOGNIZED* YOU...
EXCEPT FOR THE *SCAR* ON YOUR LIP.

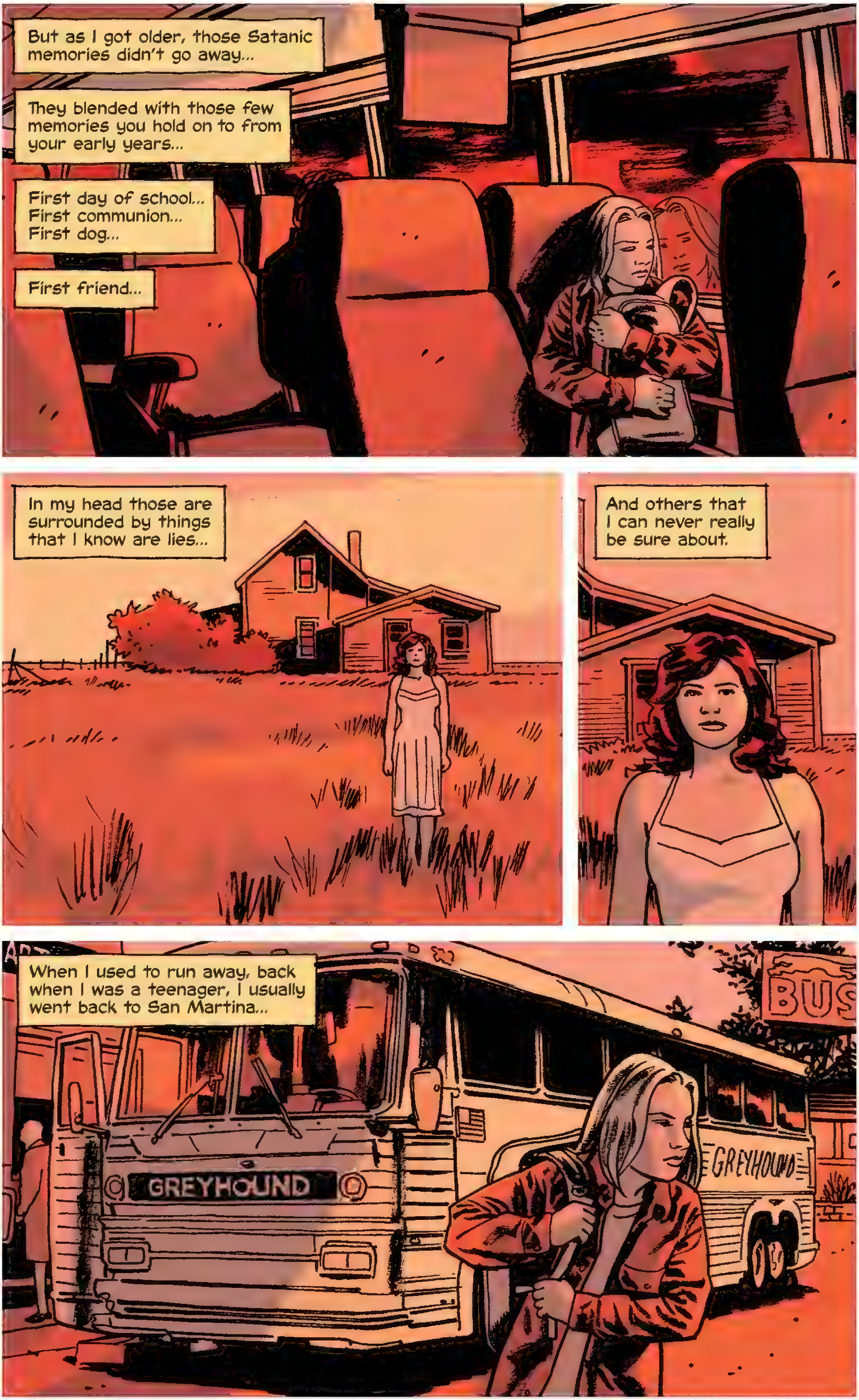
I smoke a lot of pot, so this one is definitely on me...
NOW LET ME GET US SOME COFFEE...
THAT WOULD BE *GREAT,* MA'AM... THANKS.
But it actually took me a beat to remember...
OH IT'S NO TROUBLE.
I didn't have this scar on my lip when I knew Kim Denby...
THAT'S NOT HER.
WHAT?
I'm honestly not sure what happened next...
WHERE IS SHE?
But I know there was some pain...
And then the world went out.

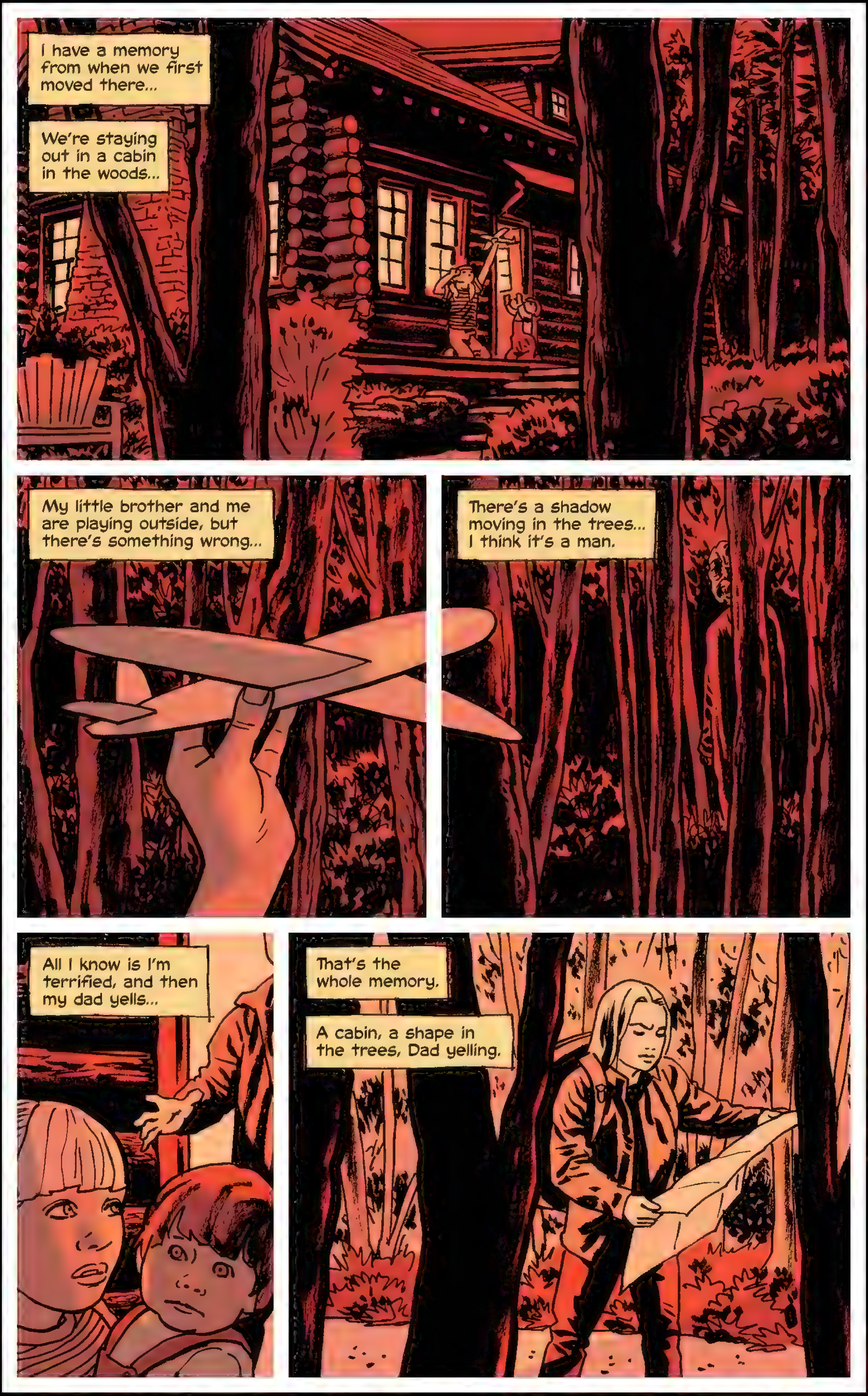
KIDS IN SATAN'S SERVICE

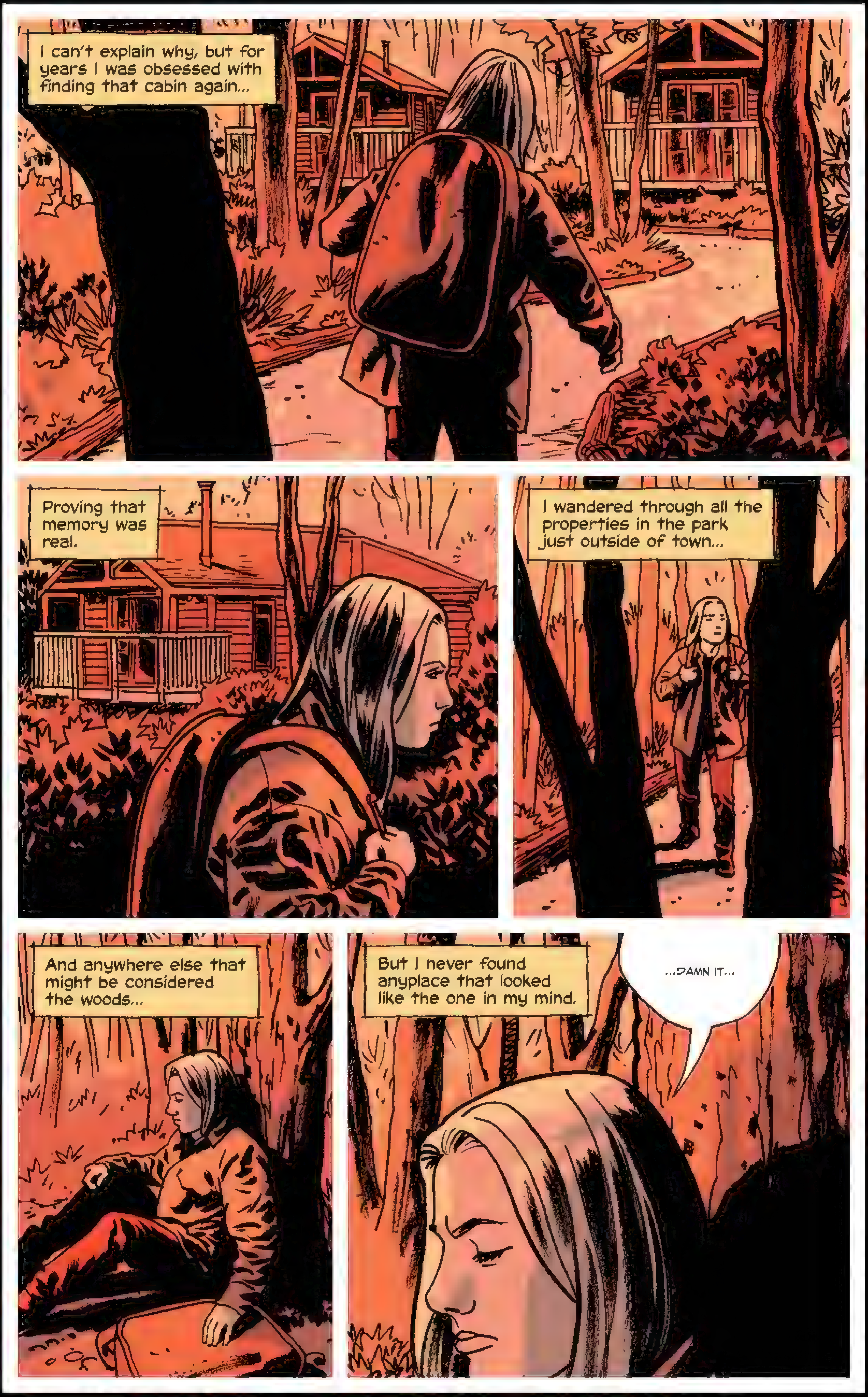

We all knew what they wanted to hear, that's the thing.
There was a book passed around at Sunday school...
MICHELLE REMEMBERS
That was where it all started, I'm pretty sure, with that book.
It's about a woman "remembering" being the victim of a Satanic cult during some kind of deep therapy sessions...
Before it was debunked, her story would influence a generation... Mine.
Other kids at church talked about it in whispers, sure it was all true...
They all knew someone who knew someone that had been abducted by a cult...
Or that weird kid in the back row? He was messed with by Satanists. Everybody knew about that kid.

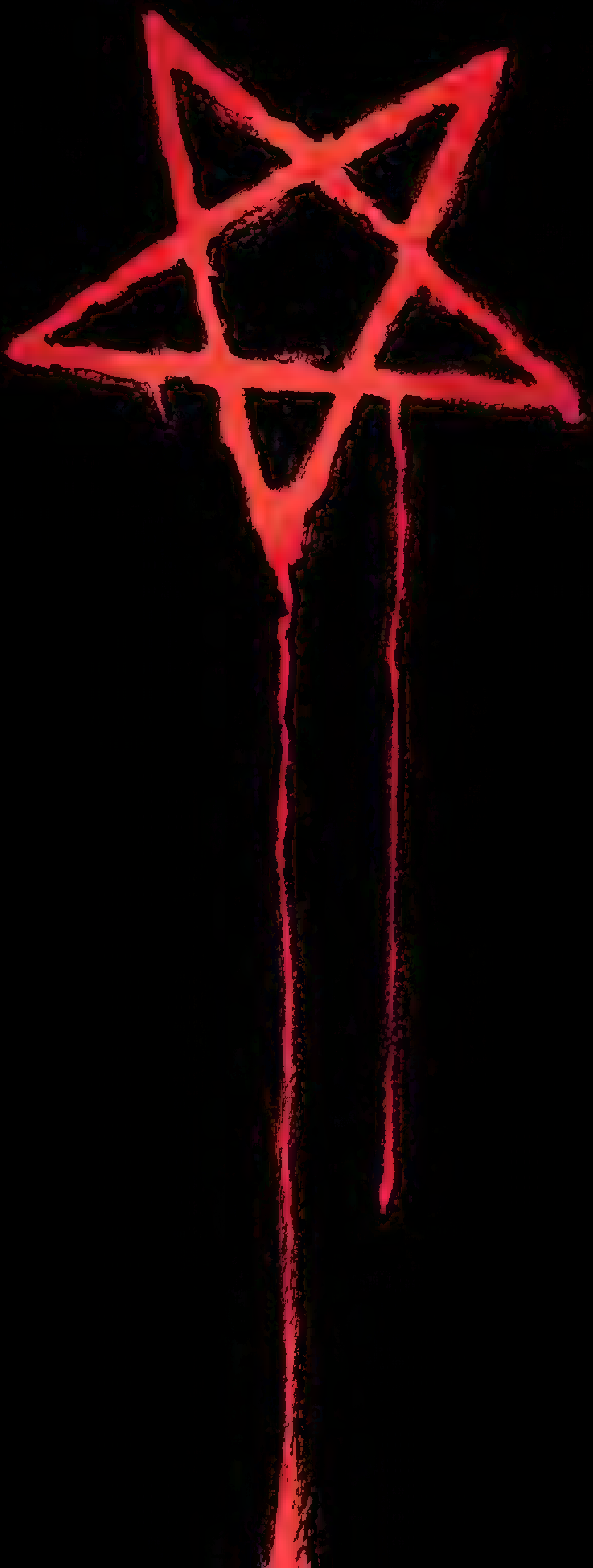

So when they called us into the office to ask us their questions...
We knew the answers.
THEY THREW *BLOOD* ON ME AND THEY *CUT* ME...
AND THEY HELD ME DOWN WHILE THE *DEMONS* TOUCHED ME *EVERYWHERE*...
And if we didn't, they fed them to us in the next question...
TIM SAID HE WAS TAKEN TO A ROOM WITH RED WALLS...
DID *YOU* GO TO THE *RED ROOM*, TOO?
YES, I WAS IN THE RED ROOM.
THAT'S WHERE THE *DEMON* LIVES.
But why, though? Why did we say anything at all?
I guess it's like Agent West said, we were kids caught up in a moment...
So why does that never feel like a good enough excuse?
OKAY... YOU DID VERY WELL, NATALIE...
YOU'RE A *VERY* BRAVE GIRL.


This has all been studied and reported on for years...
So you may already know we didn't have repressed memories, we had implanted memories...
That's what happens when a shrink makes a little kid visualize Satanic horrors over and over again, week after week...
Things you were pretty sure you made up get blurry in your mind.
I know I was never taken to secret temples to be tortured by demons...
But I have memories of it... And nightmares about it.
And during our trial, I guess I was like that sheriff in Washington...
I thought if those images were in my head, they must've happened.


But as I got older, those Satanic memories didn't go away...
They blended with those few memories you hold on to from your early years...
First day of school...
First communion...
First dog...
First friend...
In my head those are surrounded by things that I know are lies...
And others that I can never really be sure about.
When I used to run away, back when I was a teenager, I usually went back to San Martina...
GREYHOUND
GREYHOUND
BUS


I have a memory from when we first moved there...
We're staying out in a cabin in the woods...
My little brother and me are playing outside, but there's something wrong...
There's a shadow moving in the trees... I think it's a man.
All I know is I'm terrified, and then my dad yells...
That's the whole memory.
A cabin, a shape in the trees, Dad yelling.


I can't explain why, but for years I was obsessed with finding that cabin again...
Proving that memory was real.
I wandered through all the properties in the park just outside of town...
And anywhere else that might be considered the woods...
But I never found anyplace that looked like the one in my mind.
...DAMN IT...



I wake up in the basement...
Tied up and in the dark...
...FUKK...
I can hear yelling upstairs... More like screaming...
RRAAAAAA-WHAAAADAAA..!!
But she must've drugged us...
...JESUS...
I'm fading in and out...

I'm not sure how much time passes before the lights come on down here...
I'm still a bit out of it...
NATALIE, *WAKE UP*...
And I wonder, almost indifferently, if it's my turn to scream now...
I NEED YOU *CONSCIOUS* FOR THIS PART...
I NEED TO SEE YOUR *FACE*.
WHY...?
SO I CAN DO *THIS*...

AHH -- !!
FUCK -- !
DID YOU JUST FUCKING BITE ME?!
WHEN I GET OUT OF HERE, I'M GONNA STRANGLE YOU...
OKAY... NOW THERE'S THE NATALIE BURNS THAT I HEARD ABOUT...
IT REALLY IS YOU... ALMOST LIKE FATE.

EXCEPT THAT YOU'RE EARLY...
WHAT? WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?
WE WEREN'T READY FOR YOU YET, NATALIE BURNS... IT'S NOT TIME.
BUT NOW –
HEY, GET THE FUCK *OFF* ME -- !!
RELAX...
I JUST NEED YOUR BLOOD.
DON'T WORRY... I'LL TAKE *MORE* FROM YOU LATER...
THE NEXT TIME WE MEET.

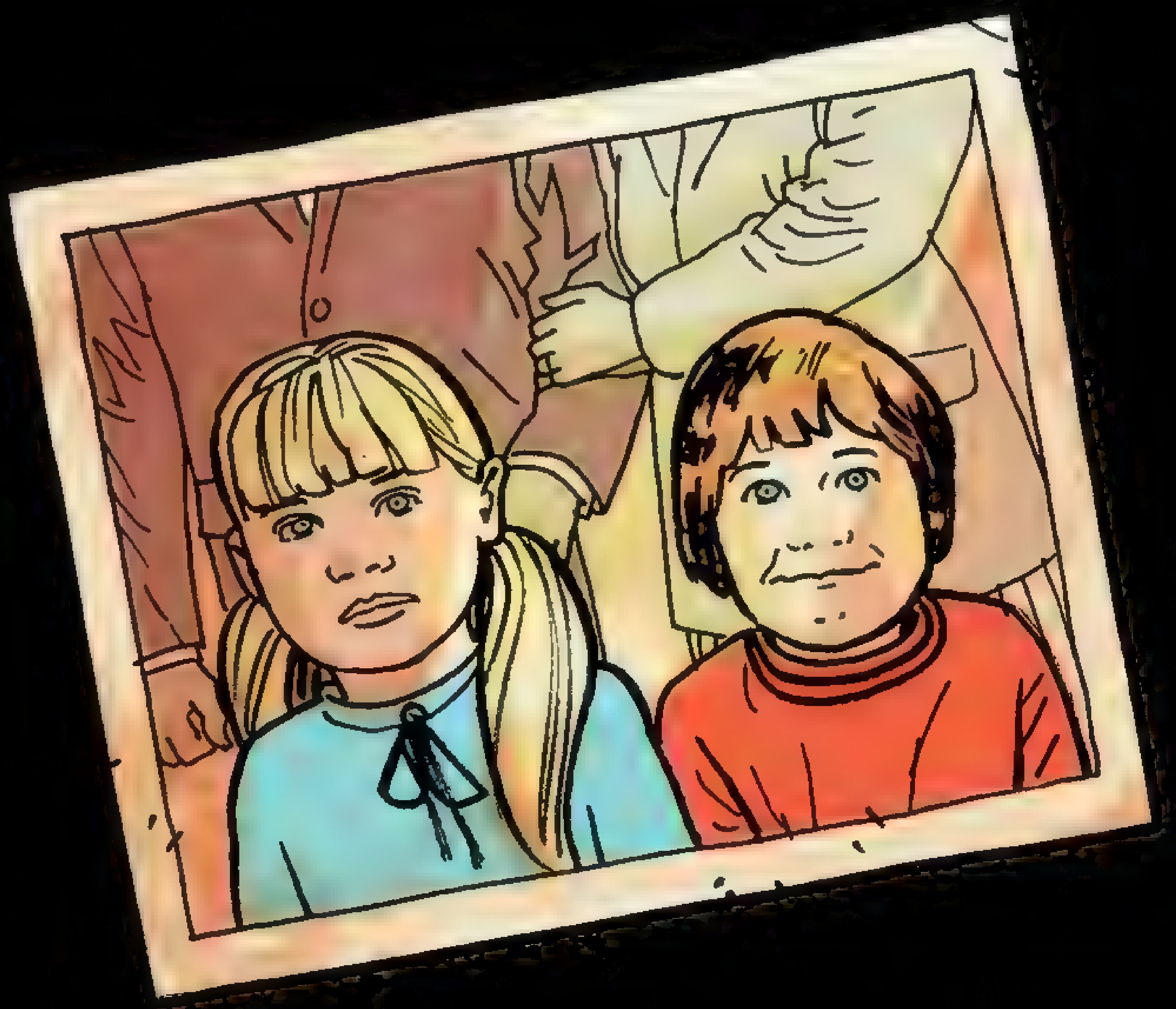
Okay... Tied to a wooden chair... with pretty good knots apparently...
Guess I'll have to try the old-fashioned way...
Breaking the chair.
KRAAK
OWW - FUCK - !!
Except it doesn't break...
It just hurts like hell.
GOD DAMN IT...

I lie there for half an hour, before Agent West has more luck escaping from his ropes than I did...
NATALIE...? ARE YOU OKAY?
NOT EVEN *REMOTELY*...
WELL... JUST HANG ON A SECOND...
C'MON... LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE...
ARE YOU *OKAY?*
I HEARD YOU *SCREAMING* UP THERE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT *ME*. I'M –
AH... SHIT.

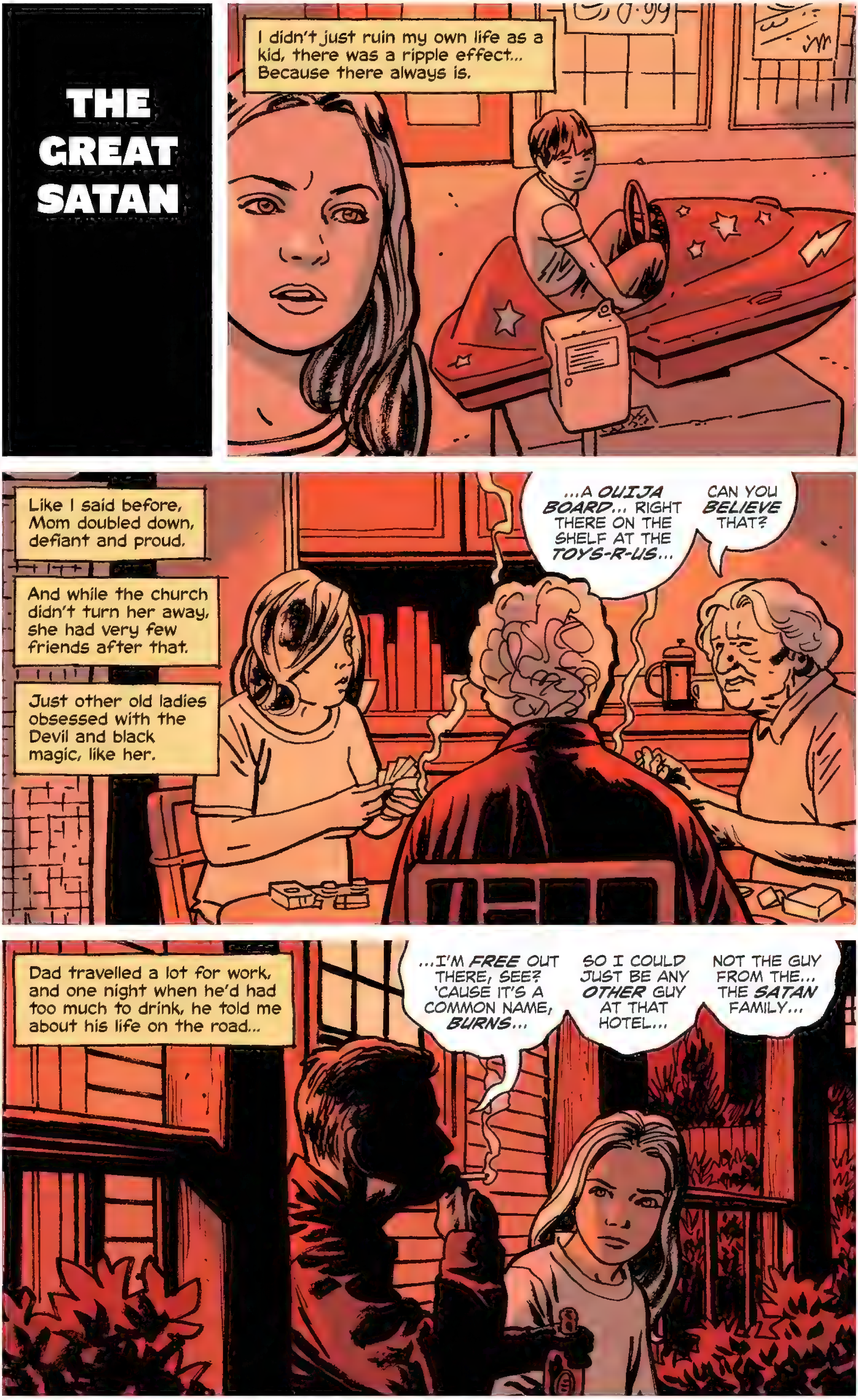
THAT'S KIM... THE *REAL* ONE.
YEAH... I FIGURED.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE BEEN DOWN HERE FOR A *DAY* OR TWO...
FUCK...
I SHOULD'VE GOTTEN HERE SOONER.
HEY, ARE YOU *BLEEDING?*
WHAT DID THAT *PSYCHO* DO TO YOU?

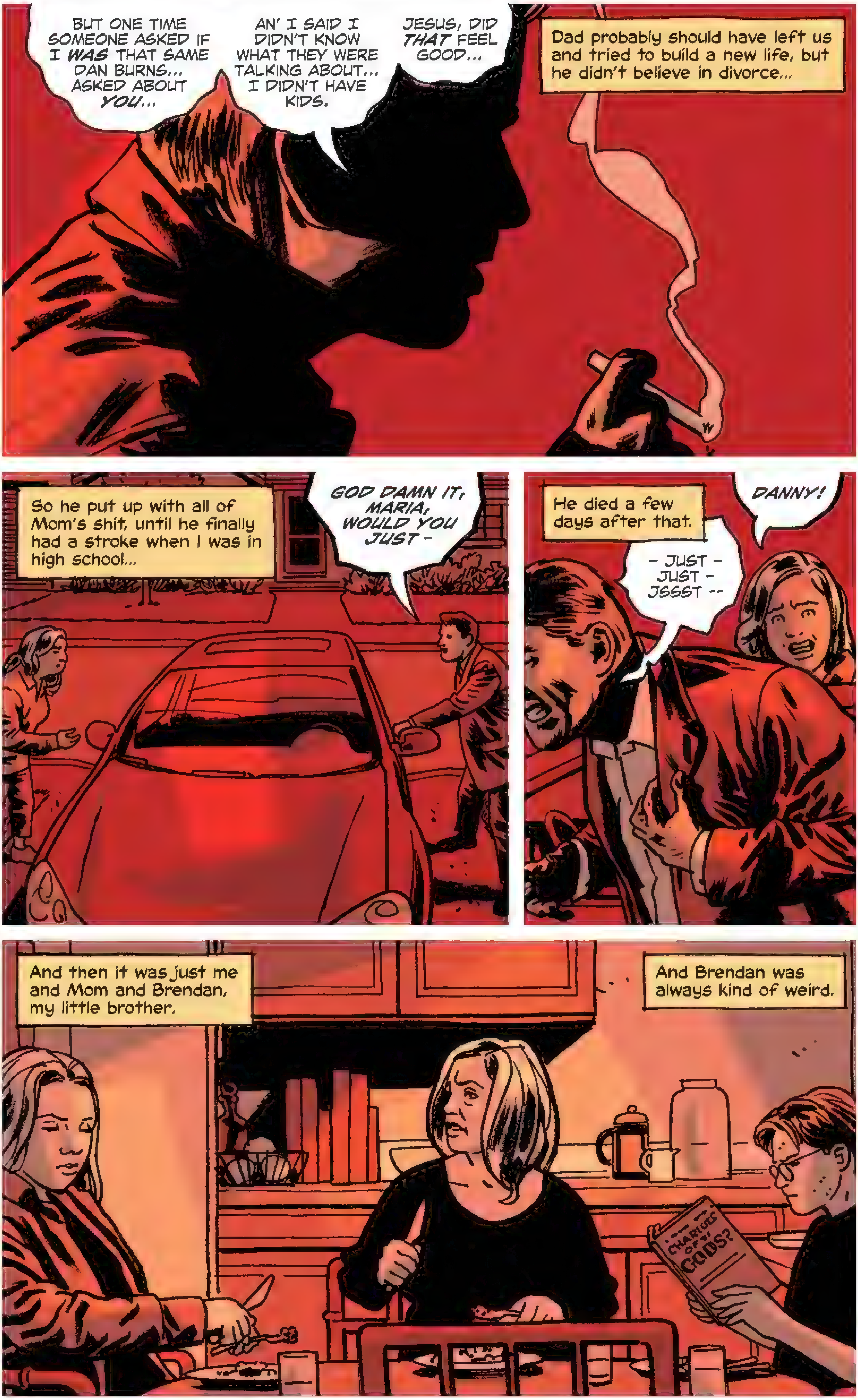
SHE CARVED SOMETHING INTO ME...
WHAT?
SOME KINDA SYMBOL...
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS.
Oh shit...
I DO.
MY LITTLE BROTHER HAS IT TATTOOED ON HIS ARM.
YOUR LITTLE BROTHER? IS HE A SATANIST?
NO, HE'S... HE'S HARMLESS...
JUST A GUY WHO SPENDS TOO MUCH TIME ONLINE... I THOUGHT...

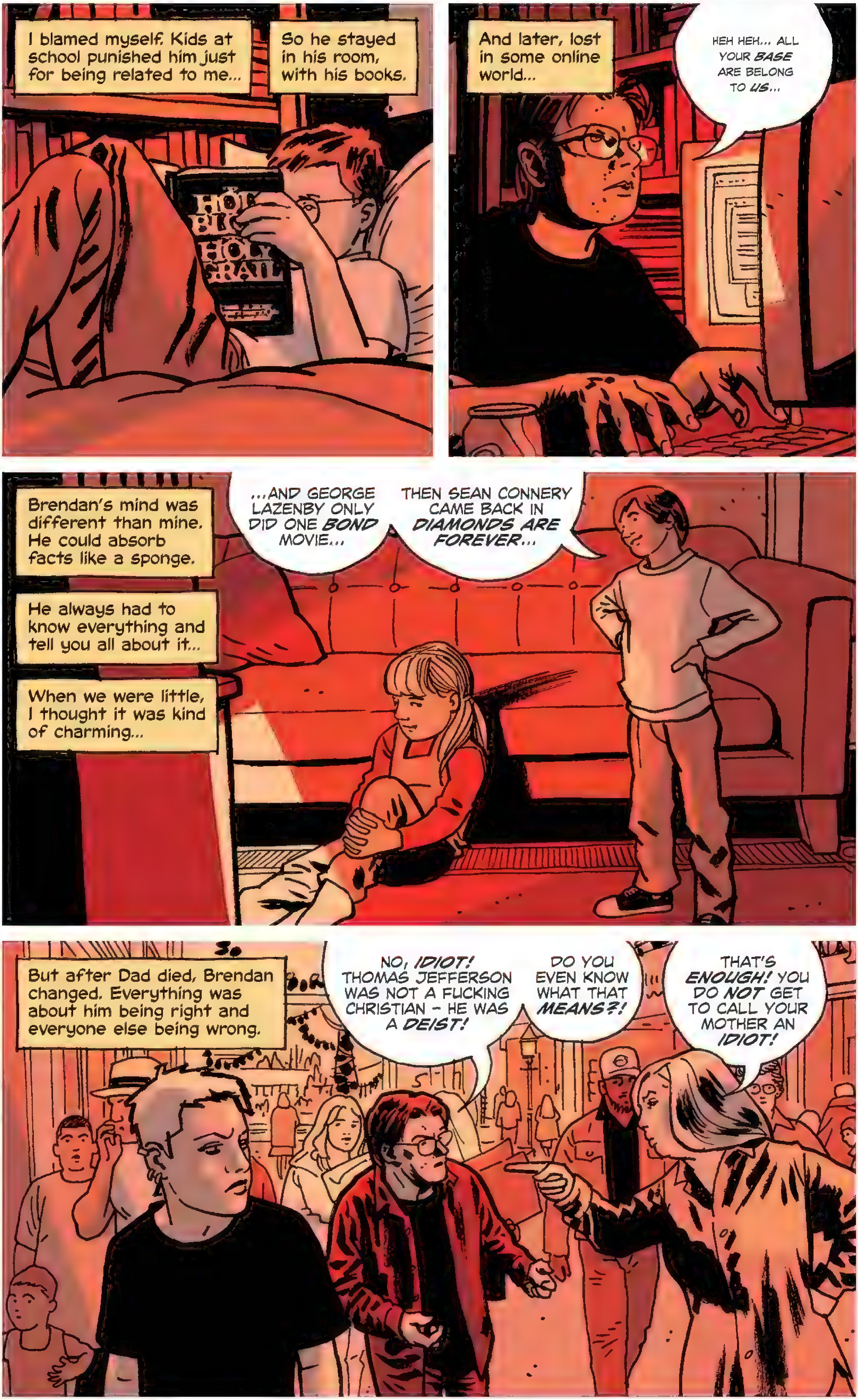
ALL RIGHT. WE NEED TO GET BACK ON THE ROAD.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
DON'T WE HAVE TO WAIT FOR YOUR *FBI* PALS AND *FORENSICS* AND ALL THAT?
NO.
WE'RE FOLLOWING THE *CASE*...
NOT SITTING IN A ROOM ANSWERING *QUESTIONS* FOR THE NEXT THREE DAYS.
WAIT... YOU'RE NOT EVEN GONNA CALL THIS IN?
KIM AND HER HUSBAND ARE FUCKING *DEAD.*
I'M ON *SUSPENSION*... OKAY?
IF I CALL IT IN, THEY'LL THROW *BOTH OF US* IN JAIL...
SO LET'S GO... YOU CAN TELL ME ABOUT YOUR BROTHER ON THE WAY.

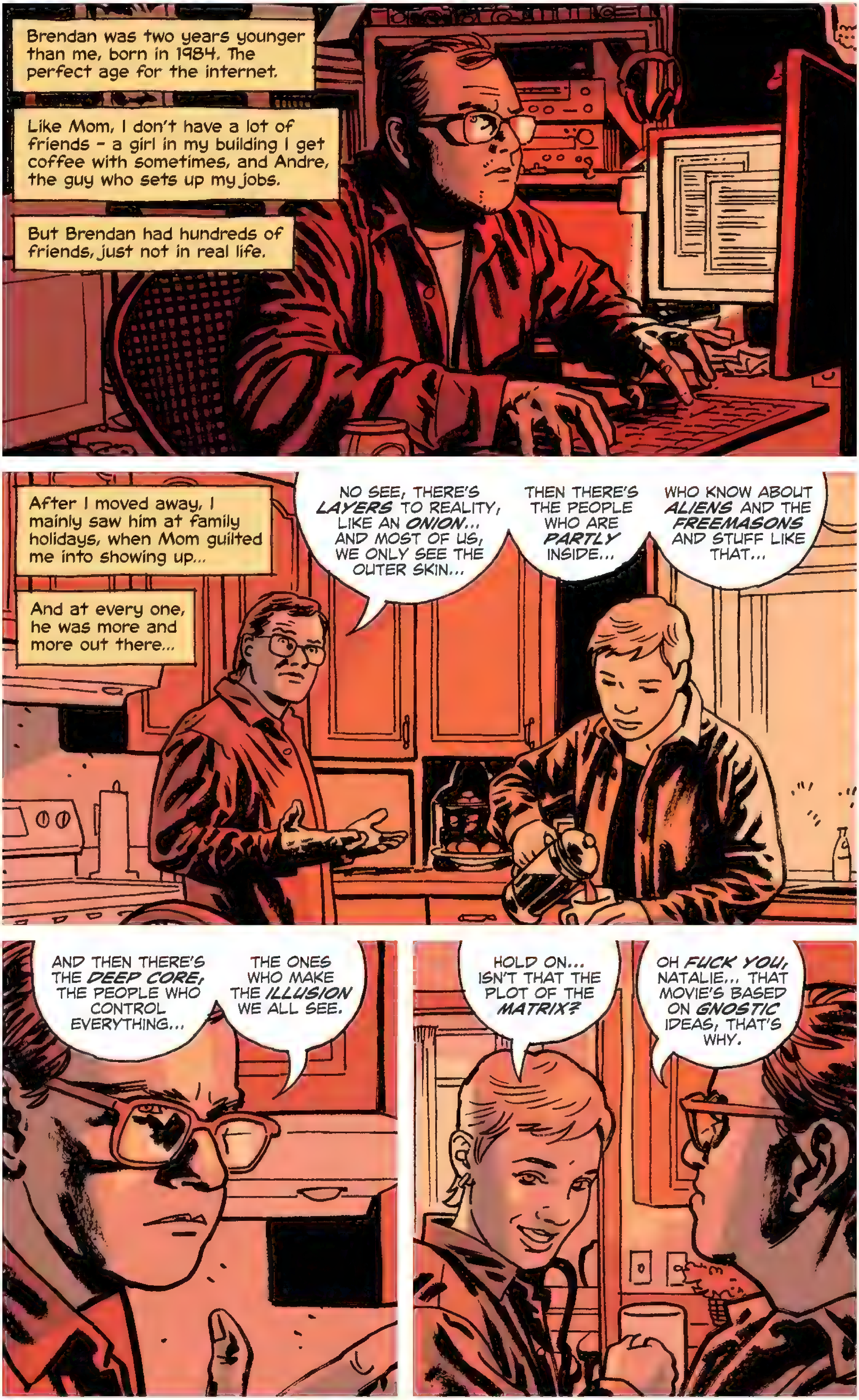


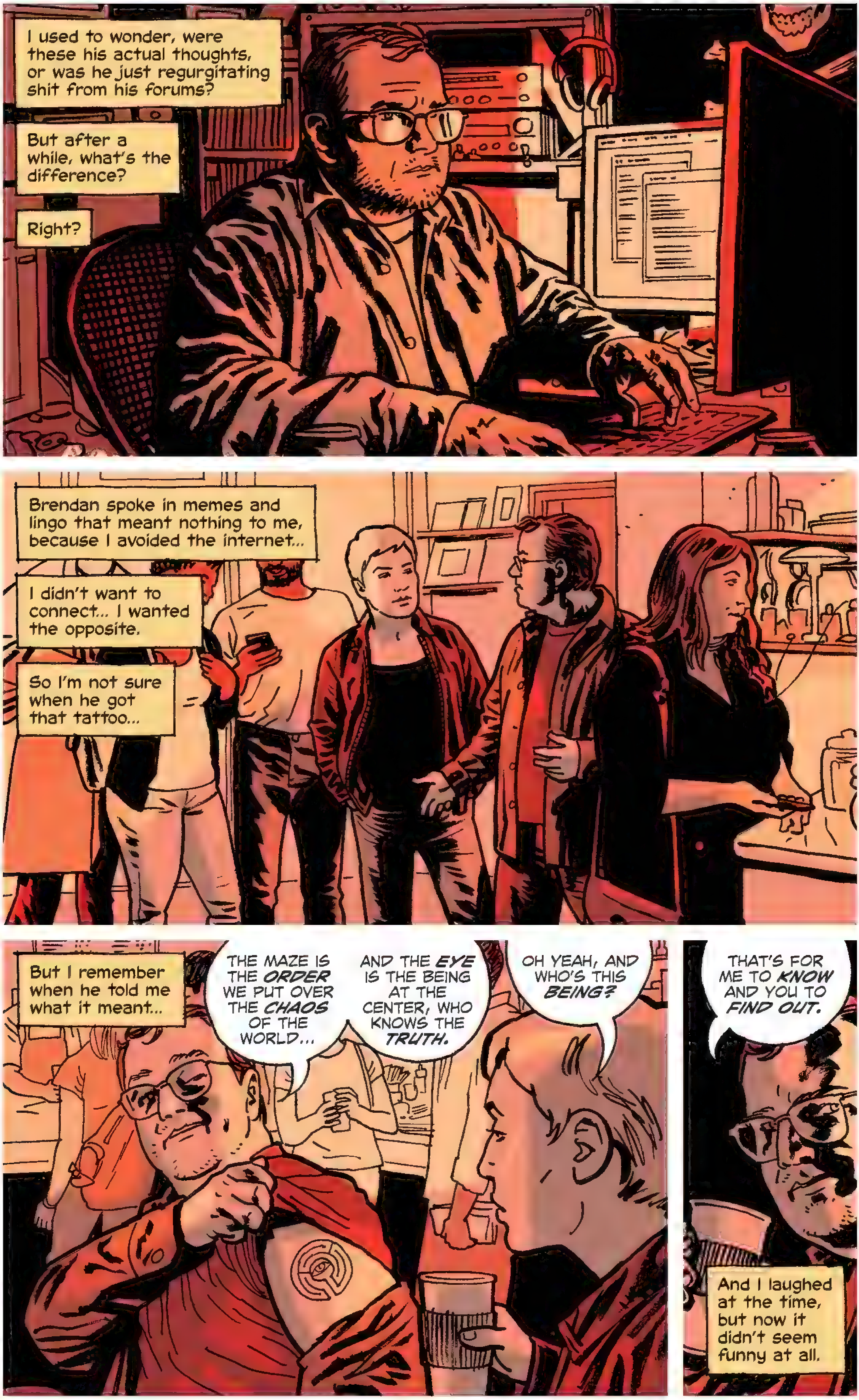
THE GREAT SATAN


I didn't just ruin my own life as a kid, there was a ripple effect... Because there always is.
Like I said before, Mom doubled down, defiant and proud.
And while the church didn't turn her away, she had very few friends after that.
Just other old ladies obsessed with the Devil and black magic, like her.
...A *OUIJA BOARD*... RIGHT THERE ON THE SHELF AT THE *TOYS-R-US*...
CAN YOU *BELIEVE* THAT?
Dad travelled a lot for work, and one night when he'd had too much to drink, he told me about his life on the road...
...I'M *FREE* OUT THERE, SEE? 'CAUSE IT'S A COMMON NAME, *BURNS*...
SO I COULD JUST BE ANY *OTHER* GUY AT THAT HOTEL...
NOT THE GUY FROM THE... THE *SATAN* FAMILY...


BUT ONE TIME SOMEONE ASKED IF I *WAS* THAT SAME DAN BURNS... ASKED ABOUT *YOU*...
AN' I SAID I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT... I DIDN'T HAVE KIDS.
JESUS, DID *THAT* FEEL GOOD...
Dad probably should have left us and tried to build a new life, but he didn't believe in divorce...
So he put up with all of Mom's shit, until he finally had a stroke when I was in high school...
GOD DAMN IT, MARIA, WOULD YOU JUST -
He died a few days after that.
DANNY!
- JUST - JUST - JSSST --
And then it was just me and Mom and Brendan, my little brother.
And Brendan was always kind of weird.
CHARIOTS OF THE GODS?


I blamed myself. Kids at school punished him just for being related to me...
So he stayed in his room, with his books.
And later, lost in some online world...
HEH HEH... ALL YOUR *BASE* ARE BELONG TO *US*...
Brendan's mind was different than mine. He could absorb facts like a sponge.
He always had to know everything and tell you all about it...
When we were little, I thought it was kind of charming...
...AND GEORGE LAZENBY ONLY DID ONE *BOND* MOVIE...
THEN SEAN CONNERY CAME BACK IN *DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER*...
But after Dad died, Brendan changed. Everything was about him being right and everyone else being wrong.
NO, *IDIOT!* THOMAS JEFFERSON WAS NOT A FUCKING CHRISTIAN – HE WAS A *DEIST!*
DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT *MEANS?!*
THAT'S *ENOUGH!* YOU DO *NOT* GET TO CALL YOUR MOTHER AN *IDIOT!*


Brendan was two years younger than me, born in 1984. The perfect age for the internet.
Like Mom, I don't have a lot of friends - a girl in my building I get coffee with sometimes, and Andre, the guy who sets up my jobs.
But Brendan had hundreds of friends, just not in real life.
After I moved away, I mainly saw him at family holidays, when Mom guilted me into showing up...
And at every one, he was more and more out there...
NO SEE, THERE'S *LAYERS* TO REALITY, LIKE AN *ONION*... AND MOST OF US, WE ONLY SEE THE OUTER SKIN...
THEN THERE'S THE PEOPLE WHO ARE *PARTLY* INSIDE...
WHO KNOW ABOUT *ALIENS* AND THE *FREEMASONS* AND STUFF LIKE THAT...
AND THEN THERE'S THE *DEEP CORE*, THE PEOPLE WHO CONTROL EVERYTHING...
THE ONES WHO MAKE THE *ILLUSION* WE ALL SEE.
HOLD ON... ISN'T THAT THE PLOT OF THE *MATRIX?*
OH *FUCK YOU*, NATALIE... THAT MOVIE'S BASED ON *GNOSTIC* IDEAS, THAT'S WHY.


I used to wonder, were these his actual thoughts, or was he just regurgitating shit from his forums?
But after a while, what's the difference?
Right?
Brendan spoke in memes and lingo that meant nothing to me, because I avoided the internet...
I didn't want to connect... I wanted the opposite.
So I'm not sure when he got that tattoo...
But I remember when he told me what it meant...
THE MAZE IS THE *ORDER* WE PUT OVER THE *CHAOS* OF THE WORLD...
AND THE *EYE* IS THE BEING AT THE CENTER, WHO KNOWS THE *TRUTH.*
OH YEAH, AND WHO'S THIS *BEING?*
THAT'S FOR ME TO *KNOW* AND YOU TO *FIND OUT.*
And I laughed at the time, but now it didn't seem funny at all.

I feel the heat of a panic attack growing inside me as Agent West explains why he's suspended from the FBI...
Why we're fleeing a crime scene.
He had worked the cult crime beat until his unit disbanded after 9/11... Now the Feds mostly focused on terrorism and right-wing militias.
So no one wanted to hear about kids from some Satanic Panic case getting picked off.
Two of them may not have even been murders, so they were not going to put resources behind his theory...
The argument about this had gotten heated, and West actually decked his boss.
He should've been fired on the spot, but there was something else he hadn't told me yet...
Two years ago, Agent West lost his wife and son... A gas leak while he was out of town on a case.

He can barely speak when he finally gets to that part... but he pushes through, and keeps going...
...I KNOW I *LIED* BUT... THIS *HUNT* IS *ALL* I'VE GOT *LEFT*, NATALIE.
NO ONE ELSE AT THE BUREAU EVEN *CARES*...
AND I WAS *RIGHT*...
THERE'S SOME *GROUP* OUT THERE, AFTER YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS...
YEAH, THERE *IS*... AND YOU KNOW *WHAT?*
MAYBE I'D LIKE TO BE IN *ACTUAL* PROTECTIVE CUSTODY NOW.
NO... YOU WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S *GOING ON*...
AND YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW YOUR *BROTHER'S* CONNECTED TO IT ALL.
GOD DAMN IT...

IF THE FBI TAKES OVER RIGHT NOW, *BRENDAN* IS THEIR *PRIME SUSPECT*...
AND IF YOU THINK YOU RUINED HIS LIFE *BEFORE*, JUST WAIT 'TIL *THEY* PUT HIM UNDER A MICROSCOPE...
TRUST ME, YOU *DON'T* WANT THAT.
WE'RE GONNA *SOLVE* THIS THING OURSELVES...
AND MAYBE WE CAN *SAVE* YOUR BROTHER FROM WHATEVER THE HELL HE'S GOTTEN *INTO*.
WE'RE GOING TO *SOLVE IT* OURSELVES?
ARE YOU INSANE?
YOU'RE A *TRAINED* INVESTIGATOR, AND YOU KNOW HOW TO *HANDLE* YOURSELF...
WE CAN *DO THIS*, NATALIE.

OKAY, FINE... BUT I WANT A GUN.
NO PROBLEM... I'VE GOT A ***BACKUP PIECE*** IN THE TRUNK.
We'd checked into a hotel in the mountains, in one of those little nowhere towns.
The place was mostly deserted because of the wildfires a few miles away...
But the manager said we weren't in the evacuation zone.

Still, it feels odd and desolate here...
And as I watch the flames in the night...
The panic attack I'd been holding off finally takes me...
GOD DAMN IT...
I've worked so hard to make my life small and contained... controlled...
To never feel like this again.
It starts in my head... Fear, moving like a pinball, faster and faster...
The same thoughts over and over, until they become a blur...
What have I done? Do I deserve this? What is happening?

How have I let this insanity back into my life?
Did I almost just get killed?
And Brendan... fucking Brendan...
It's an unheard scream in my skull... faster than sound...
And then I shake like an earthquake...
And my breath comes in halting jags, painful...
Until I turn to stone.
HEY... NATALIE...?

OH GOD... YOU'RE FREEZING...
COME ON...
LET'S GET YOU INSIDE...
THERE WAS A *MAN*... WATCHING ME...
THERE'S NO ONE THERE.
THERE *WAS*...
HERE, JUST LIE STILL... YOU'RE OKAY...
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY, NATALIE...
It's kind of sad how much this actually helps...

Being held, told everything will be all right...
It's like the one thing we all always need.
WHY ARE YOU SO NICE? DON'T YOU KNOW YOU'RE AN FBI AGENT...?
USUALLY I'M NOT... BUT I DON'T KNOW...
I THINK MAYBE FINDING YOU WHEN I DID...
IT RESTORED MY *FAITH* A BIT... OR SOMETHING...
YOUR FAITH?
AND WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IN?
THAT MOST OF US LIVE IN *DENIAL*... OF WHAT'S AROUND US...

HEY... WAIT, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
DON'T WORRY... I WANT TO...
NATALIE... *STOP*...
THIS ISN'T RIGHT...
IT DOESN'T *MEAN* ANYTHING... IT'S JUST...
EVERYTHING IS SO FUCKED UP...
I JUST WANTED TO NOT BE *THINKING* ABOUT THAT FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
I'M SORRY... I CAN'T...

But I don't put my shirt back on...
And it turns out, he can.
It's not good, though.
It's desperate.
Like animals trying to stay alive.
Like we know it's a mistake but... We just keep pretending.
I know this kind of sex.
It doesn't take my mind off anything, but eventually I sleep.

And in my dreams I'm a little girl again, down in those tunnels...
With demons all around me...
But this time my family is there, too...
Mom is yelling at me and Dad is saying it's all my fault...
WHY DID YOU BRING US HERE?
And how could I do this to him...
I'm trying to scream back at them, "I thought this was what you wanted!" but my lips won't open...
Then Brendan runs away into the tunnels, towards the monsters...

And the next thing I know, it's morning...
Only the sun doesn't come out...
The wind has shifted.
KNNK KNNK
EVERYBODY UP! TIME TO GO!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
FIRE CHANGED DIRECTIONS. WHOLE AREA'S EVACUATING.
BETTER FIND YOUR FRIEND AND GET A MOVE ON, GIRL.
... MY FRIEND?
YEAH, HE WANDERED INTO TOWN ABOUT AN HOUR AGO...
HE DID...?

SHIT...
Did he really just leave?
HEY? YOU HERE?
I don't even know his first name...
Which somehow makes me feel even weirder here... and more alone...
At least his car's still in the parking lot...
But I've got no keys...
Where the fuck did this asshole go at six in the morning... with a naked woman in his bed?

Everyone's leaving town as I'm heading into it...
There's a strange energy in the air...
Which fits the apocalyptic sky...
Christ, I can hardly breathe... where is this guy?
There's only three shops on the main road... All closed...
And... oh...
A church.
Is that where he is?

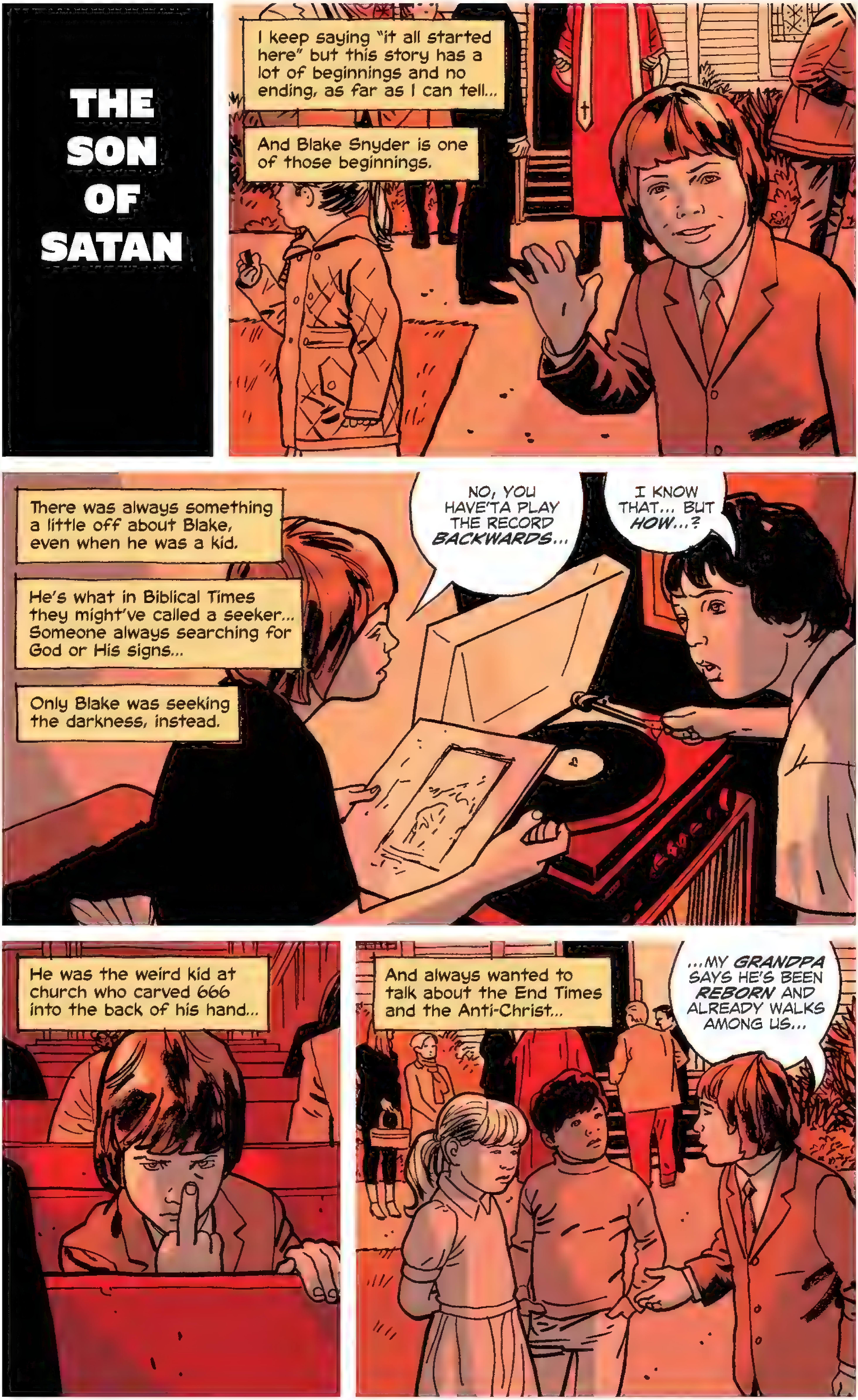
Did he wake up and run right to confession?
I know it was bad sex, but come on...
Okay, here he comes...
At least we can get the fuck out of –
Oh shit.
LOOK OUT!

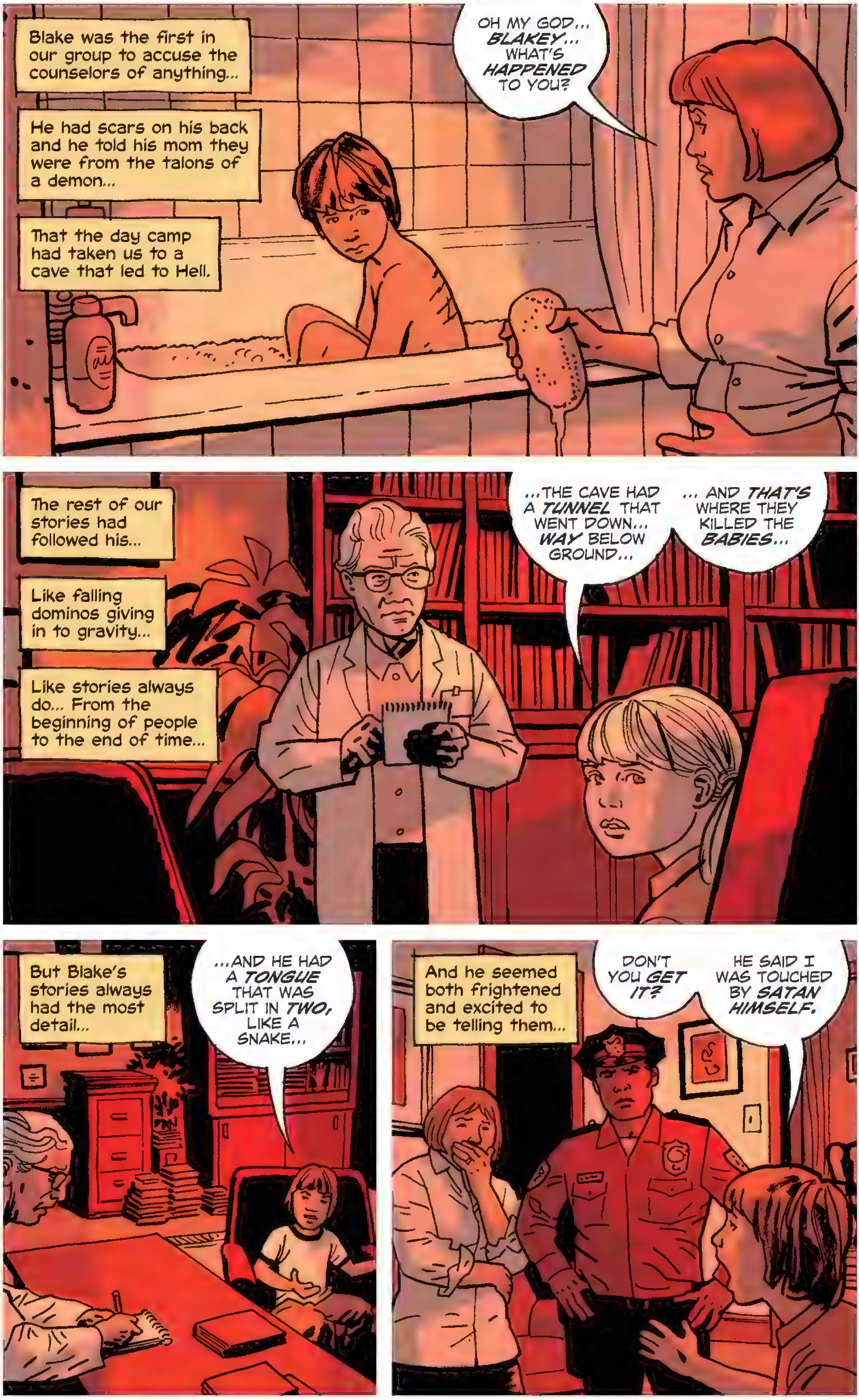
KRAAK
UTT – !!
HEY – !! HEY – !
STOP THA –
KARUNNH
UHH -- !
... LADY...?
HEY... YOU OKAY, LADY?
WHAT WERE YOU DOIN' IN THE ROAD?
...HUNH... WAIT... WHUU...

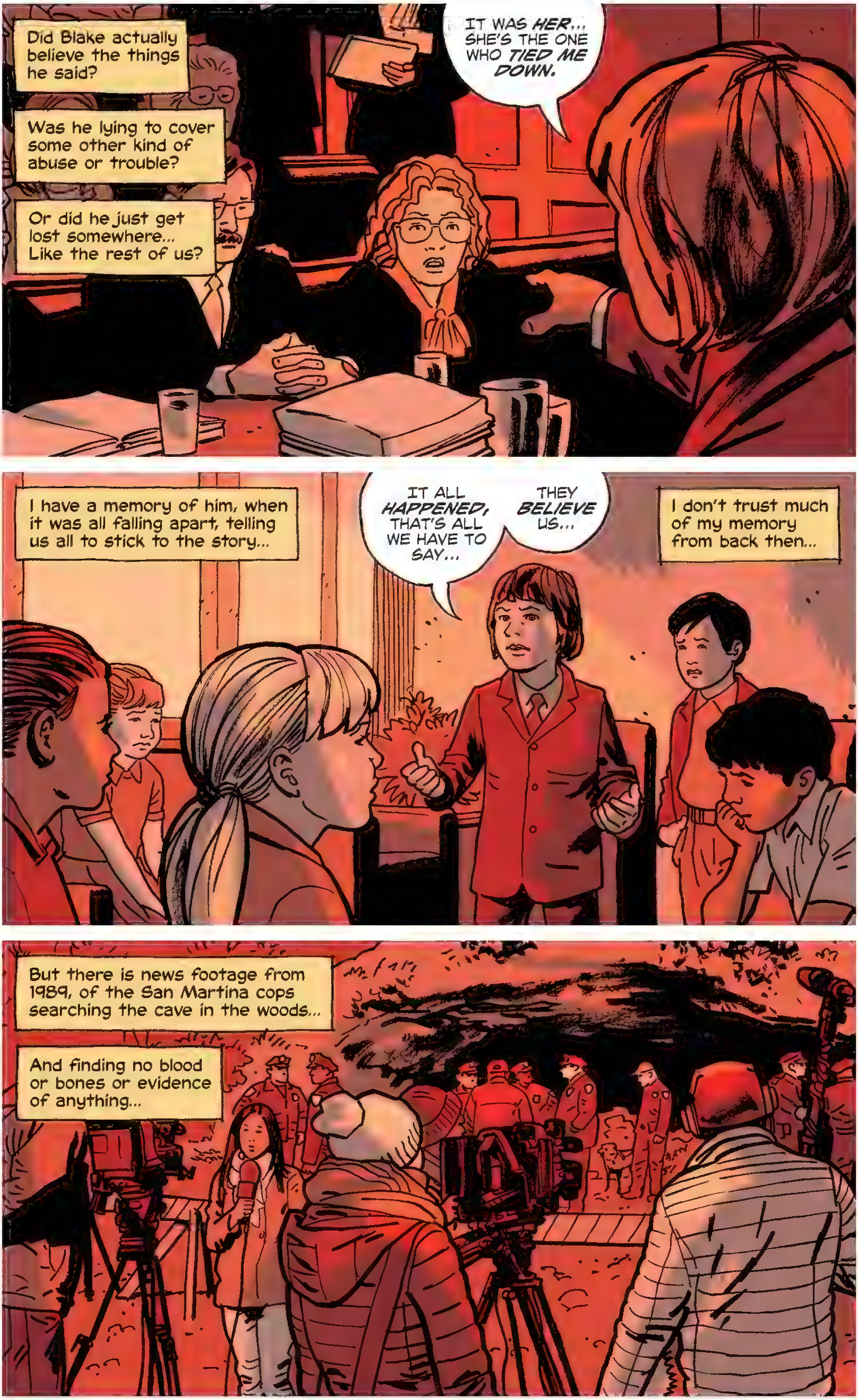
...WAIT... STOP THEM...
...THEY'RE TAKING HIM...
WHOA... TAKE IT *SLOW,* LADY...
STOP... I'M FINE...
NO, REALLY... JUST –
GET OFF OF ME!
JESUS! I WAS JUST TRYIN' TO *HELP!*
The van... Shit.
Agent West is in the van.

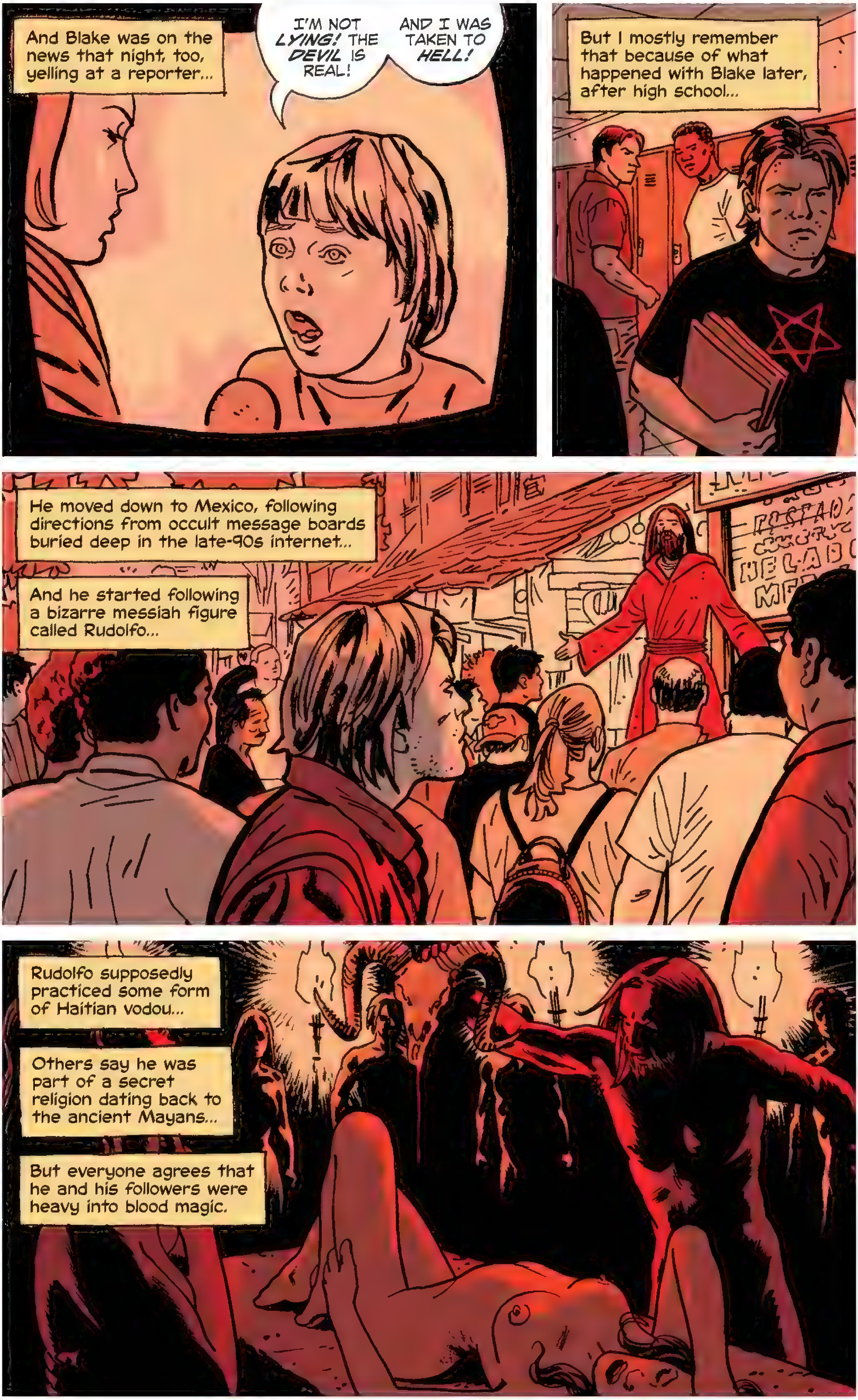
Northwinds Baptist Church
AND BEHOLD A PALE HORSE
He took him, the man who was watching me before...
Only this time... I recognize him...
I'm sure he wanted me to.
He's the one who started all of this, back when we were children...
And according to Agent West, he's supposed to be dead.

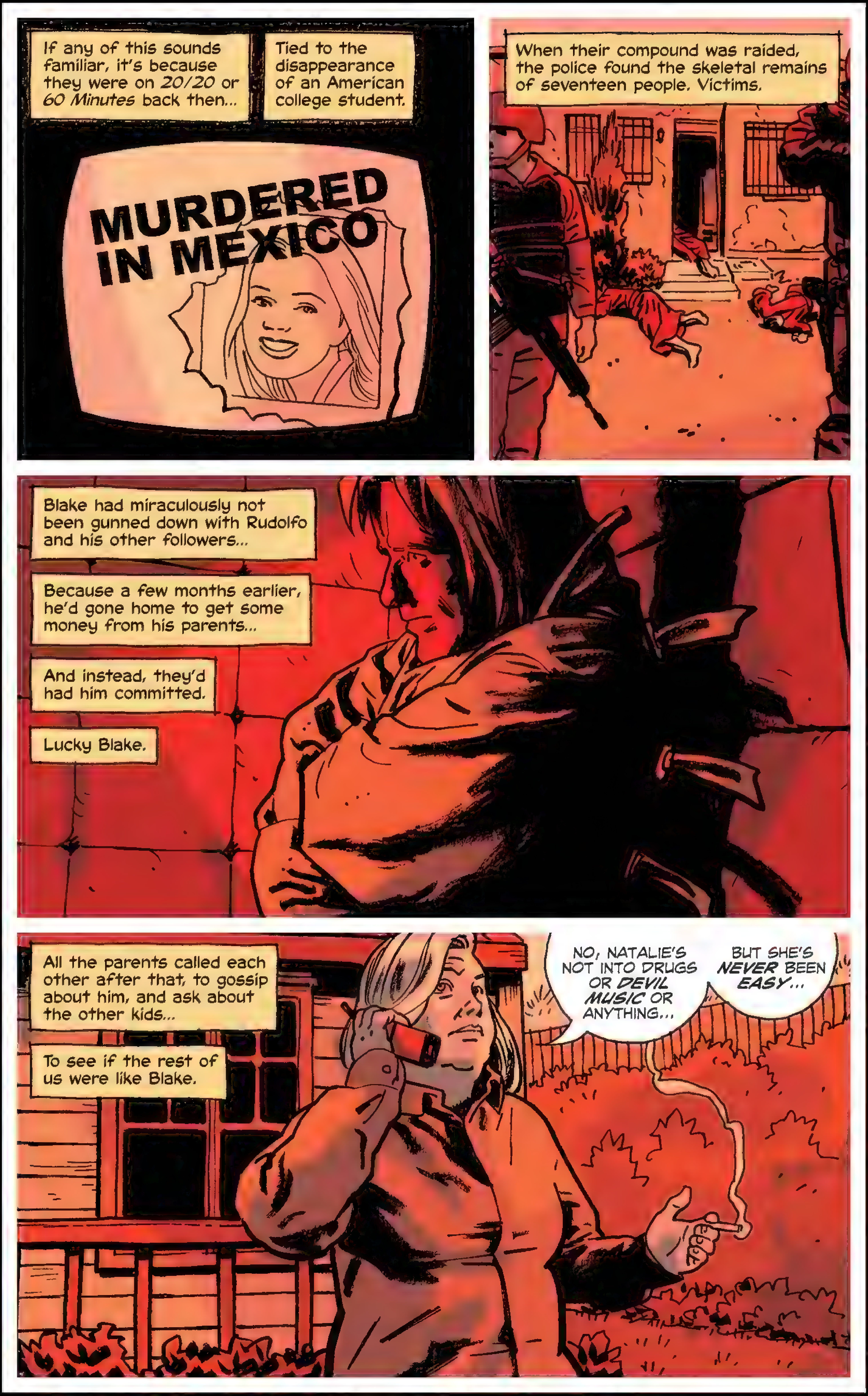
THE SON OF SATAN

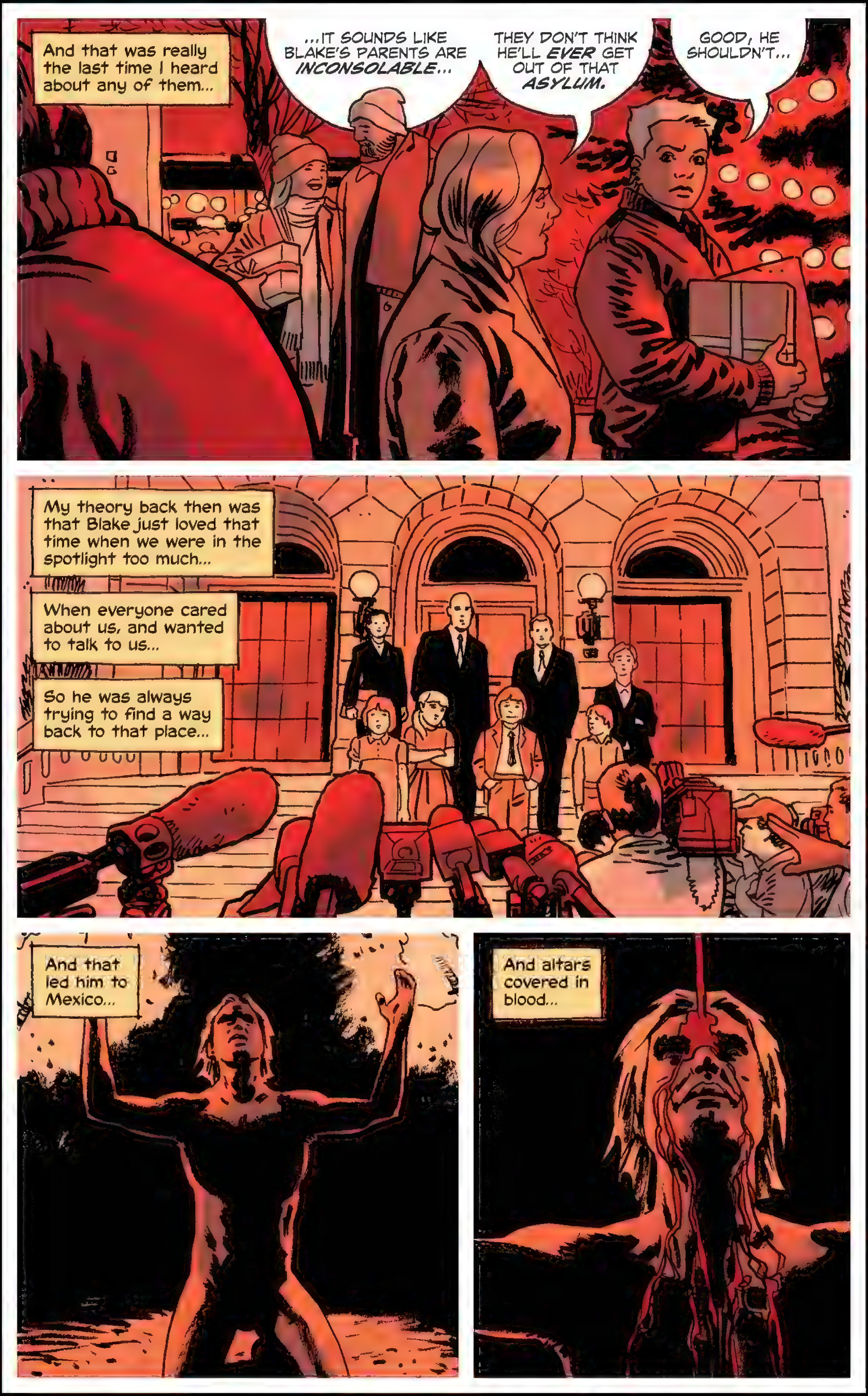

I keep saying "it all started here" but this story has a lot of beginnings and no ending, as far as I can tell...
And Blake Snyder is one of those beginnings.
There was always something a little off about Blake, even when he was a kid.
He's what in Biblical Times they might've called a seeker... Someone always searching for God or His signs...
Only Blake was seeking the darkness, instead.
NO, YOU HAVE'TA PLAY THE RECORD BACKWARDS...
I KNOW THAT... BUT HOW...?
He was the weird kid at church who carved 666 into the back of his hand...
And always wanted to talk about the End Times and the Anti-Christ...
...MY GRANDPA SAYS HE'S BEEN REBORN AND ALREADY WALKS AMONG US...


Blake was the first in our group to accuse the counselors of anything...
He had scars on his back and he told his mom they were from the talons of a demon...
That the day camp had taken us to a cave that led to Hell.
OH MY GOD... BLAKEY... WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
The rest of our stories had followed his...
Like falling dominos giving in to gravity...
Like stories always do... From the beginning of people to the end of time...
...THE CAVE HAD A TUNNEL THAT WENT DOWN... WAY BELOW GROUND...
... AND THAT'S WHERE THEY KILLED THE BABIES...
But Blake's stories always had the most detail...
...AND HE HAD A TONGUE THAT WAS SPLIT IN TWO, LIKE A SNAKE...
And he seemed both frightened and excited to be telling them...
DON'T YOU GET IT?
HE SAID I WAS TOUCHED BY SATAN HIMSELF.


Did Blake actually believe the things he said?
Was he lying to cover some other kind of abuse or trouble?
Or did he just get lost somewhere... Like the rest of us?
IT WAS *HER*... SHE'S THE ONE WHO *TIED ME DOWN.*
I have a memory of him, when it was all falling apart, telling us all to stick to the story...
IT ALL *HAPPENED,* THAT'S ALL WE HAVE TO SAY...
THEY *BELIEVE* US...
I don't trust much of my memory from back then...
But there is news footage from 1989, of the San Martina cops searching the cave in the woods...
And finding no blood or bones or evidence of anything...


And Blake was on the news that night, too, yelling at a reporter...
I'M NOT *LYING!* THE *DEVIL* IS REAL!
AND I WAS TAKEN TO *HELL!*
But I mostly remember that because of what happened with Blake later, after high school...
He moved down to Mexico, following directions from occult message boards buried deep in the late-90s internet...
And he started following a bizarre messiah figure called Rudolfo...
PASTAD
HELADO
Rudolfo supposedly practiced some form of Haitian vodou...
Others say he was part of a secret religion dating back to the ancient Mayans...
But everyone agrees that he and his followers were heavy into blood magic.


If any of this sounds familiar, it's because they were on *20/20* or *60 Minutes* back then...
Tied to the disappearance of an American college student.
MURDERED IN MEXICO
When their compound was raided, the police found the skeletal remains of seventeen people. Victims.
Blake had miraculously not been gunned down with Rudolfo and his other followers...
Because a few months earlier, he'd gone home to get some money from his parents...
And instead, they'd had him committed.
Lucky Blake.
All the parents called each other after that, to gossip about him, and ask about the other kids...
To see if the rest of us were like Blake.
NO, NATALIE'S NOT INTO DRUGS OR *DEVIL MUSIC* OR ANYTHING...
BUT SHE'S *NEVER* BEEN *EASY*...


And that was really the last time I heard about any of them...
...IT SOUNDS LIKE BLAKE'S PARENTS ARE *INCONSOLABLE*...
THEY DON'T THINK HE'LL *EVER* GET OUT OF THAT *ASYLUM.*
GOOD, HE SHOULDN'T...
My theory back then was that Blake just loved that time when we were in the spotlight too much...
When everyone cared about us, and wanted to talk to us...
So he was always trying to find a way back to that place...
And that led him to Mexico...
And altars covered in blood...

But now I remember the Blake from church again... From before everything...
The weird kid...
And I see him smiling at me now... With his eyes that see things I never have...
And I fear for my brother... and Agent West...
I should've known the second he told me Blake was identified by dental records...
But I was too caught up in my own bullshit, like always...
So now I'm too late, and I'm chasing a ghost...
Right back to hell.
San Martina
NEXT THREE
EXITS

For the last five years, my brother has lived in a trailer park ten minutes from San Martina...
BRENDAN?
ARE YOU *HOME?*
And I never understood why he moved back here, until now...
OPEN THE *DOOR,* YOU STUPID *PIZZAGATE* MORON!
WHAT...?
NATALIE? WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
YOU *NEVER* COME HERE...
YEAH, *NO SHIT...* NOW LET ME IN...
What was I doing there? Well, after Blake drove off with Agent West... I hotwired the rental car to follow them.
But they were long gone by the time I got to the highway.
So I just drove all day, to the only breadcrumb left in this fucked up story...
HAVE YOU BEEN *TALKING* TO SOMEONE ABOUT *ME,* BRENDAN?
UMM... WELL...

I DON'T *HIDE* THE FACT THAT I'M YOUR *BROTHER*...
...IF *THAT'S* WHAT YOU'RE ASKING.
GOD DAMN IT, BRENDAN... WHO HAVE YOU BEEN TALKING TO?
SOMEONE ELSE WITH THAT *MAZE TATTOO?*
WHAT?
HOW COULD YOU *KNOW* THAT?
WHAT'S GOING *ON,* NATALIE... WHY ARE YOU *HERE?*
SOMEONE TRACKED ME DOWN...
I tell him about my last few days... On the road with a rogue FBI man...
The killing of the other kids from the Satanic Six...
And the crazy woman who carved the maze symbol into Agent West...
HOLY SHIT... NATALIE... THAT'S...
HOLY SHIT...

Then he tells me about the group he's part of, his friends with the maze tattoo...
They're online conspiracy junkies... True believers in the invisible hands that pull the strings of the world...
SOME OF THEM ARE BASICALLY *OBSESSED* WITH THE *SATANIC SIX* CASE...
THEY EVEN GO OUT TO THAT *CAVE* IN THE WOODS SOMETIMES...
SO WHAT... YOU USED BEING MY *BROTHER* TO LOOK LIKE A *BIG MAN* TO THESE *FREAKS?*
THAT'S NOT *FAIR*... IT WAS *MY* LIFE, TOO, NATALIE...
ANYWAY, THEY'RE JUST FREE THINKERS... TRYING TO *OPEN* MINDS...
THEY WOULDN'T *HURT* ANYONE...
YEAH SURE, *STRANGERS* FROM THE INTERNET WOULD NEVER HURT *ANYONE*...
...THAT *NEVER* HAPPENS, RIGHT?
I'M *SORRY*... WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Brendan says one of his new "friends" is a night watchman at some office building in town...
And they've had get-togethers there a few times.
So that's where we go...
It feels unlikely that Blake and his people will be there with Agent West, after their dramatic escape that morning...
But maybe we'll find some other clue...
A list of addresses for secret temples... or a cult handbook...
Who knows?
NATALIE...?
YOU OKAY?

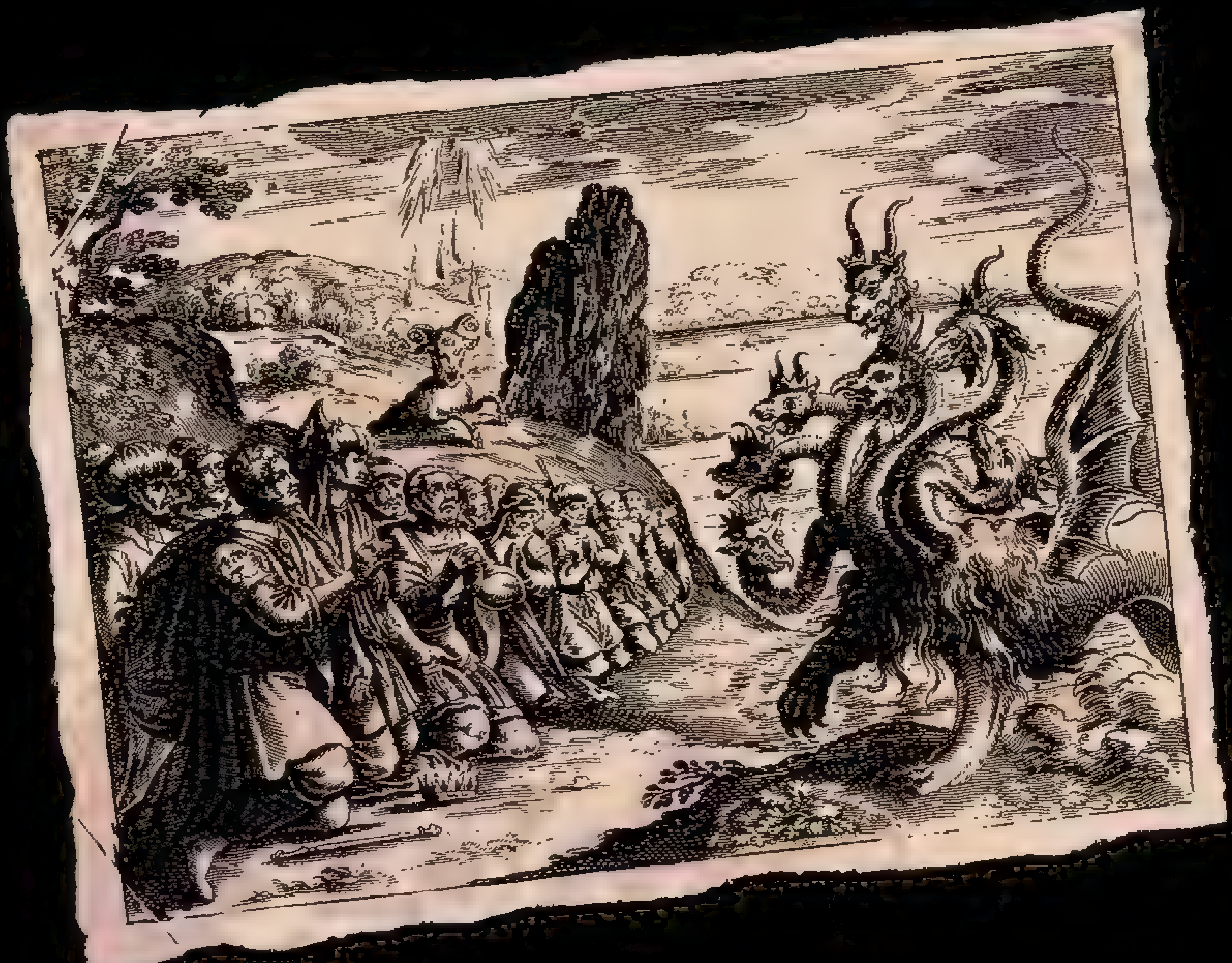
IT'S SO *WEIRD* TO BE HERE... IT'S BEEN *THIRTY-FIVE YEARS*...
BUT THIS STREET IS ALMOST *EXACTLY* THE SAME...
I FEEL SICK.
OOPWEEO
Suddenly there's a sound, from the center of town...
It grows louder then fades... Like an air raid siren...
Or what I imagine those sound like.
WHAT *IS* THAT?
SOME KIND OF *ALARM*...
MY NEIGHBOR SAID THE SAN MARTINA COPS CALLED A *CURFEW* TONIGHT...
TSUNAMI WARNING, HE SAID...

BUT ON THE FORUMS THEY'RE SAYING IT'S A DEFCON WARNING...
NUKES? OH, COME ON...
BRENDAN, YOU'VE GOT TO GET OFF THE INTERNET...
YOU'RE SO SMART... BUT YOU WASTE ALL YOUR TIME TALKING TO THESE LUNATICS...
THEY'RE NOT LUNATICS... NOT ALL OF THEM...
AND IT'S NOT A WASTE OF TIME... PEOPLE ARE SCARED, NATALIE...
THE WORLD IS CROOKED AND FUCKED UP...
AND EVERYONE IN THE GOVERNMENT ARE ALL LIARS...
MY FRIENDS, THEY'RE JUST TRYING TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON OUT THERE...
JESUS... YOU REALLY DRANK THE KOOL-AID, DIDN'T YOU?
OH FUCK OFF... WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
YOU BARELY EVEN PAY ATTENTION TO THE WORLD AROUND YOU.

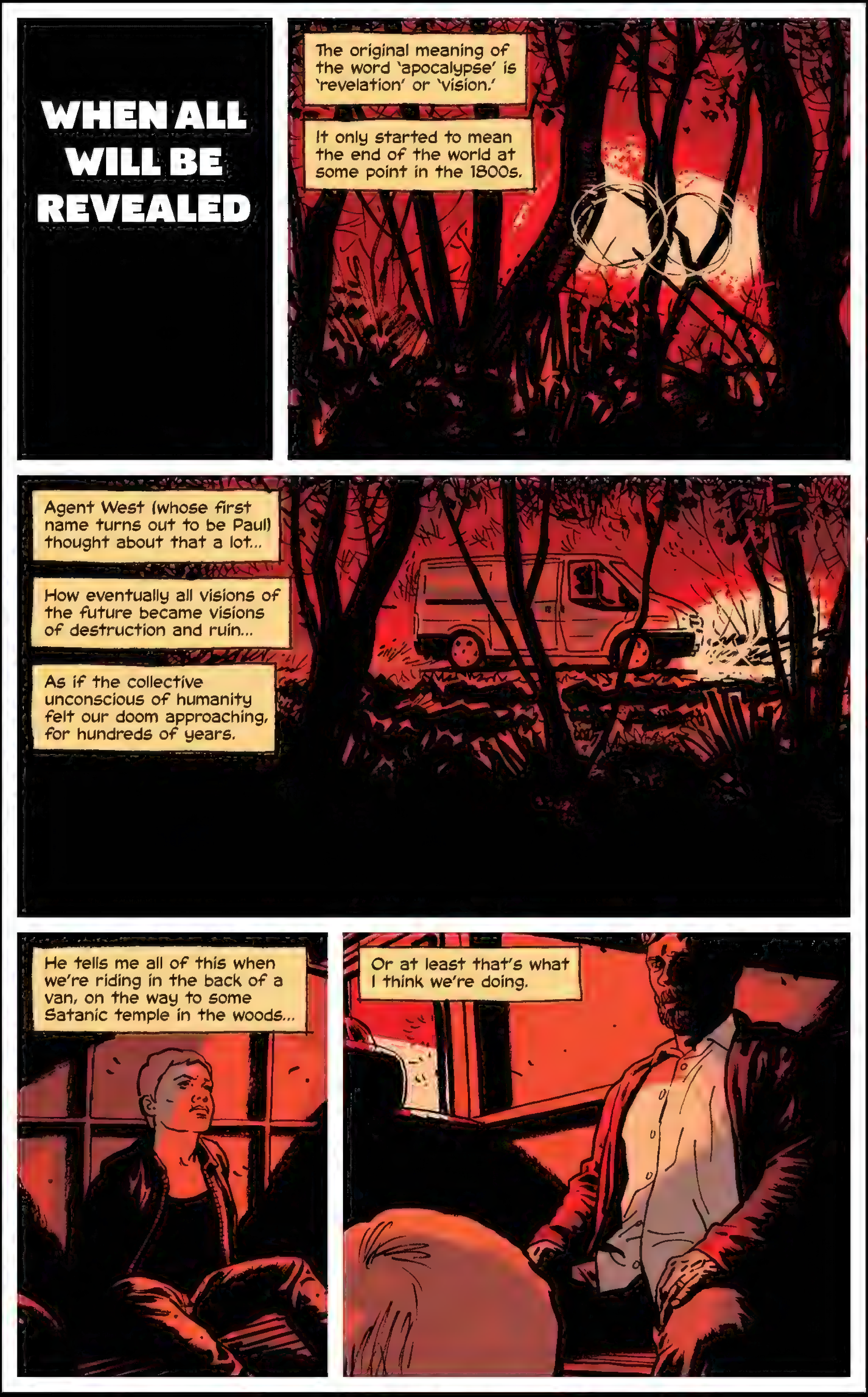
Brendan's right about me, of course...
I've been hiding from the world most of my life...
THAT'S THE PLACE?
YEAH, WE HUNG OUT IN THIS OFFICE ON THE *SECOND FLOOR,* AT THE CORNER...
Considering the world, and me, I think it's been a good decision so far.
YOU MEAN, THE ONE WITH THE *LIGHTS* ON?
SHIT... I THINK I JUST SAW A *SHADOW* MOVE...
SOMEONE'S UP THERE.
STAY CLOSE AND KEEP QUIET.
WHOA... YOU HAVE A *GUN?*
YEAH, THE FBI AGENT HAD A *BACKUP* IN THE RENTAL CAR.

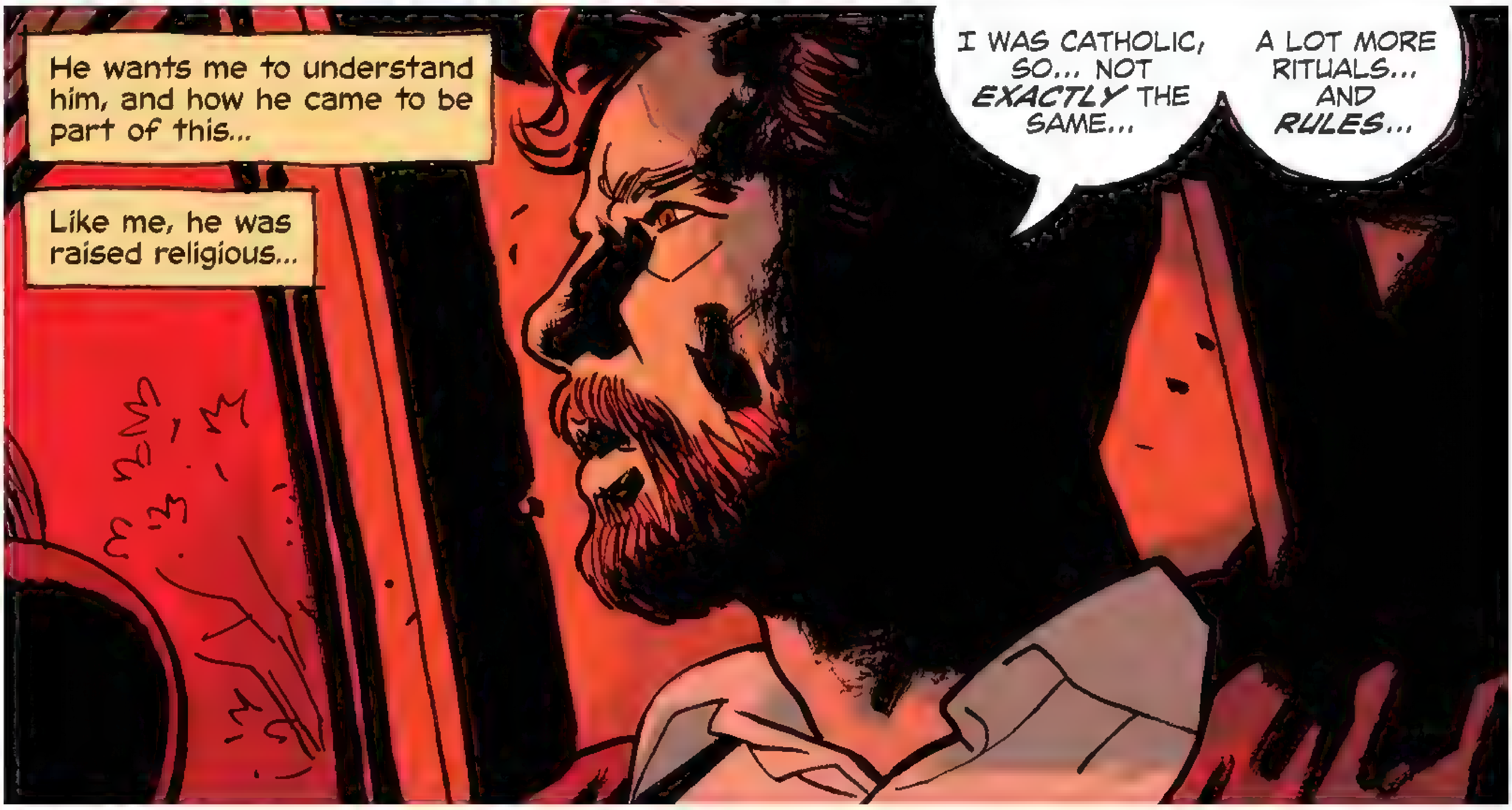
But still, there's something in the way he said that...
That I barely pay attention to the world around me...
Something familiar.
DON'T MOVE... I *SEE* SOMEONE.
ABADDON REALTY
SHIT, IT'S HIM...
I THINK HE'S ALONE...
WATCH MY BACK...
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
HEY... AGENT WEST...?
HEY...

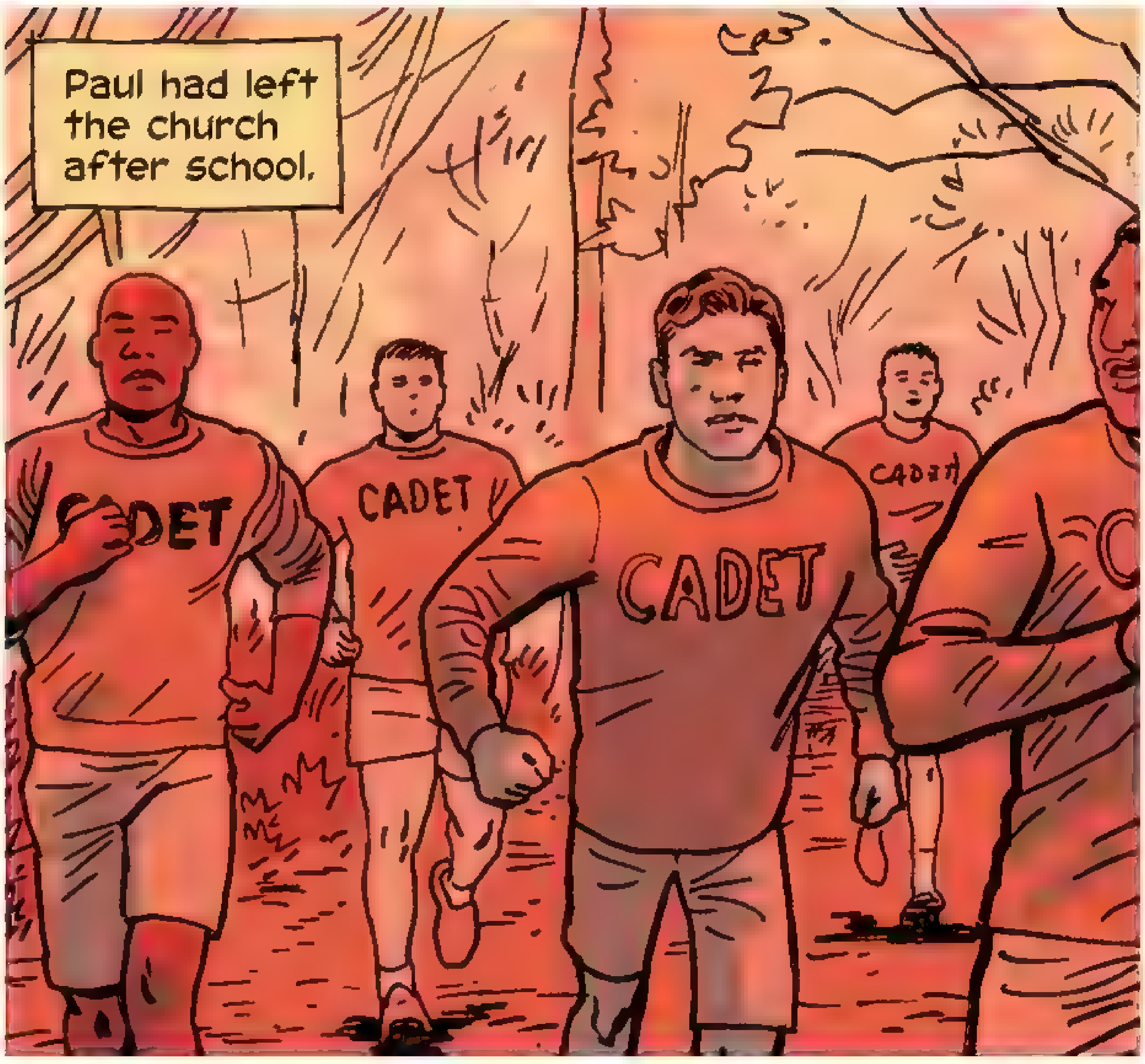
ARE YOU *OKAY?*
NO... *NONE* OF US ARE OKAY.
He's not tied up.
OH *WAIT* A SECOND...
I'M *SORRY,* NATALIE...
I'm just remembering Agent West...
Saying we live in denial of the world around us...
BRENDAN - NO!!
When the chloroform hits me.
Fucking pothead.

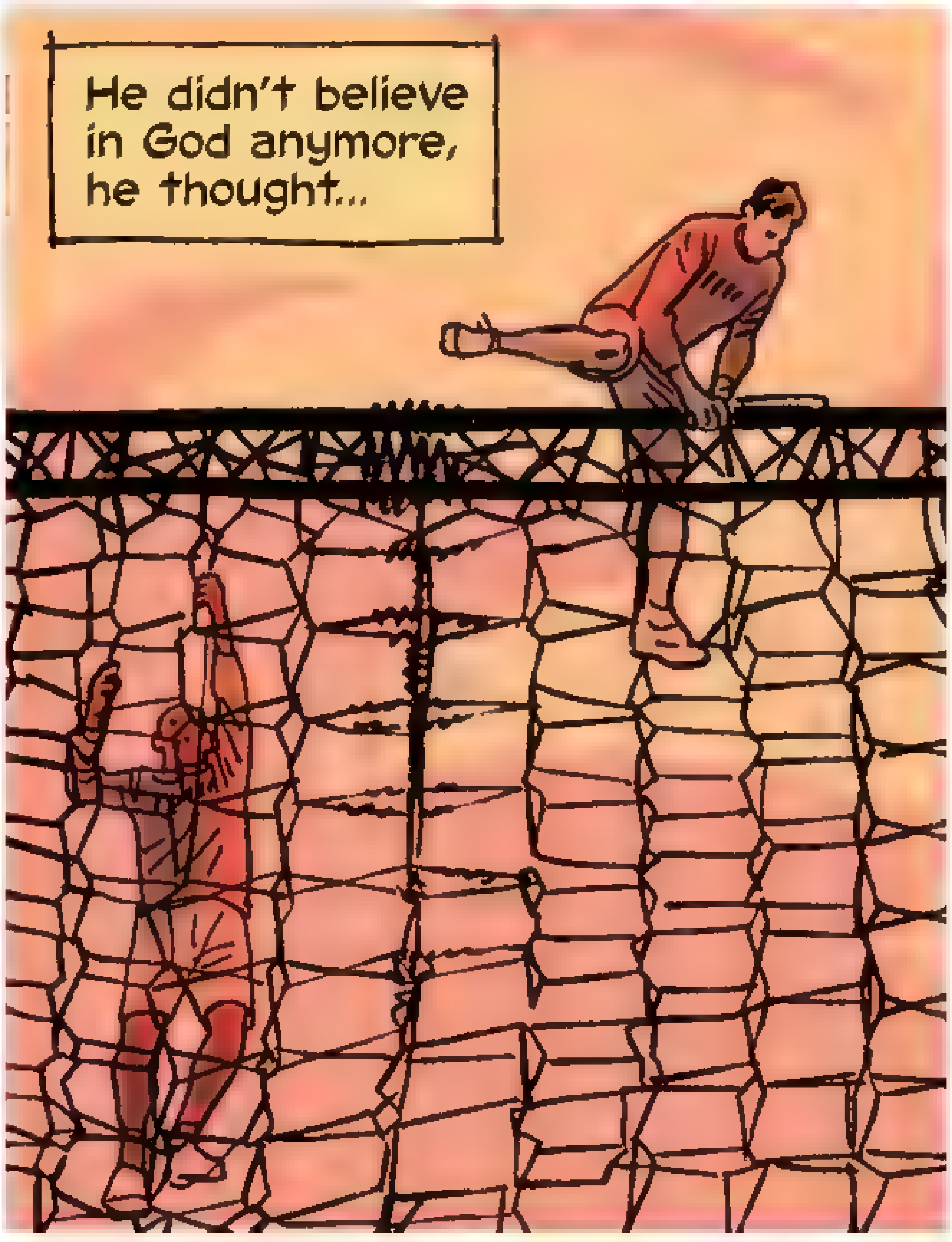


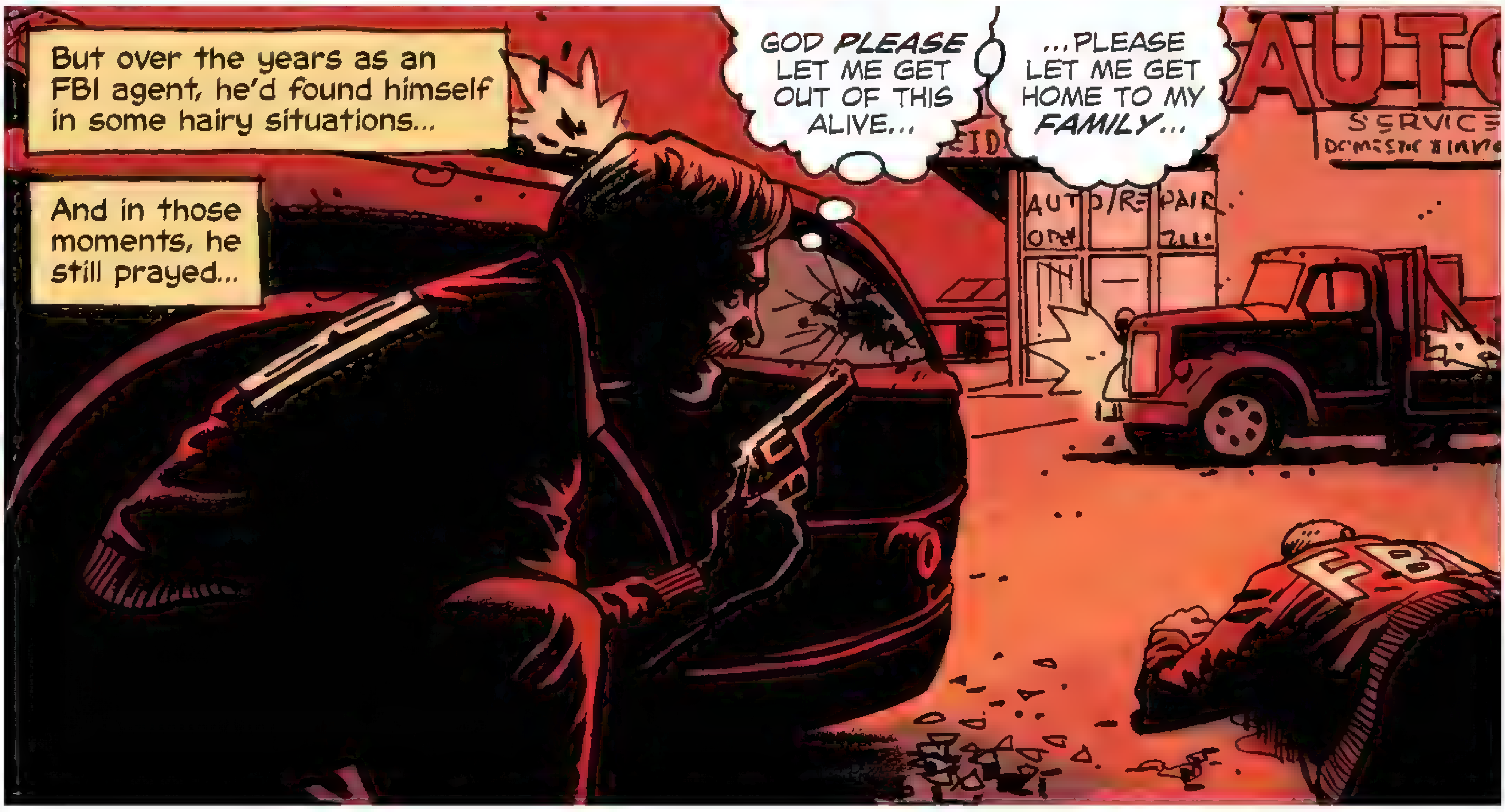
WHEN ALL WILL BE REVEALED

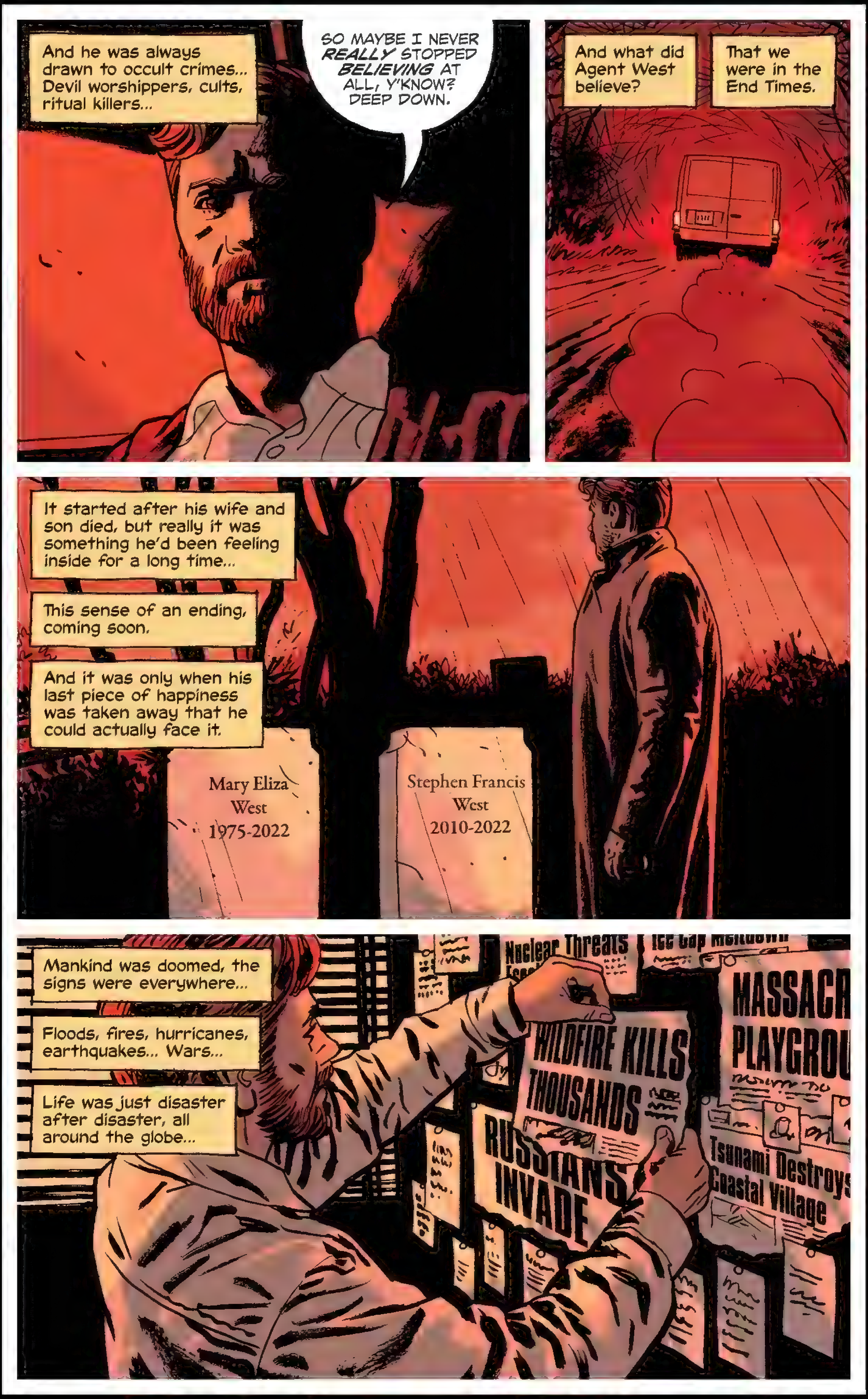

The original meaning of the word 'apocalypse' is 'revelation' or 'vision.'
It only started to mean the end of the world at some point in the 1800s.
Agent West (whose first name turns out to be Paul) thought about that a lot...
How eventually all visions of the future became visions of destruction and ruin...
As if the collective unconscious of humanity felt our doom approaching, for hundreds of years.
He tells me all of this when we're riding in the back of a van, on the way to some Satanic temple in the woods...
Or at least that's what I think we're doing.

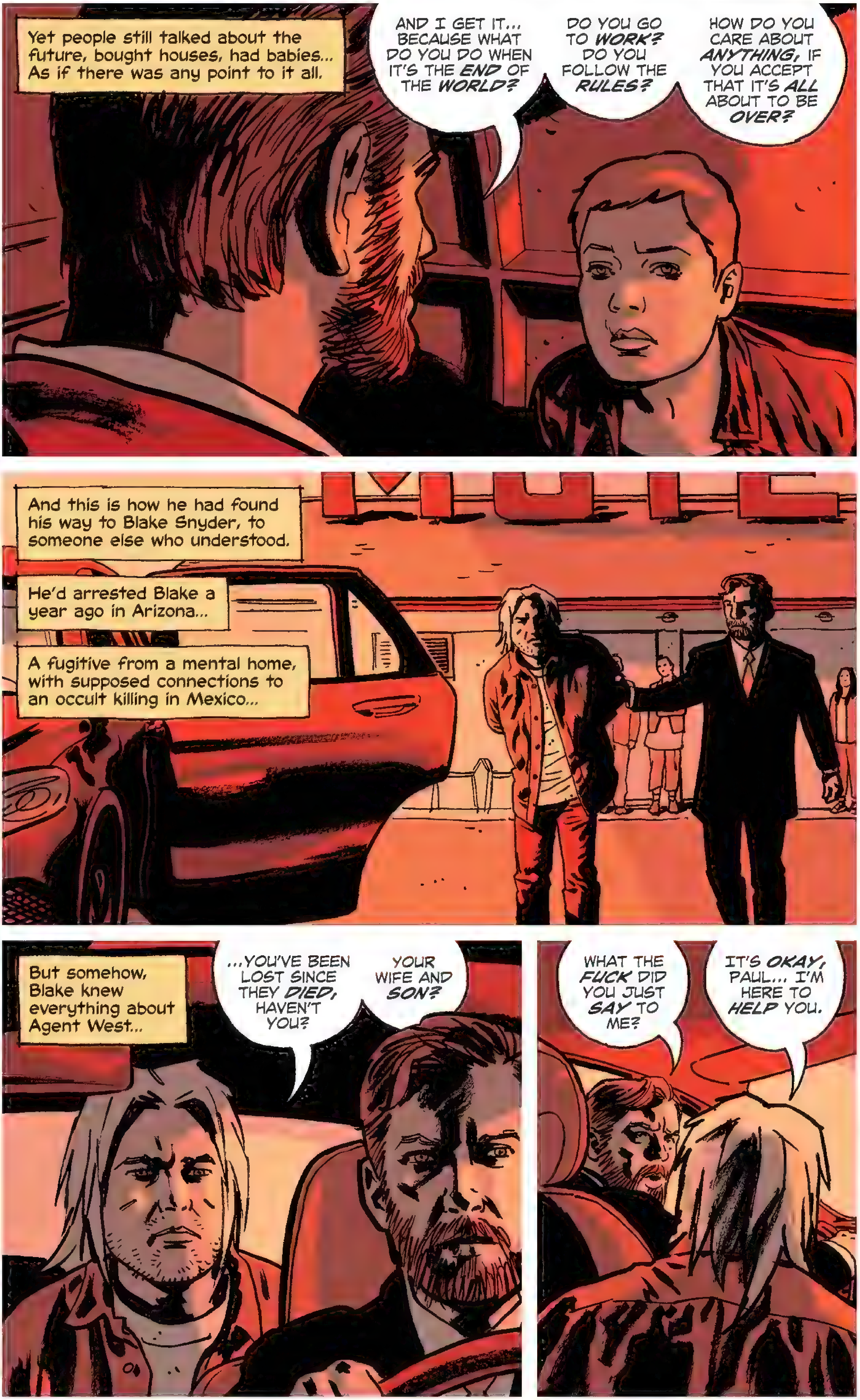

He wants me to understand him, and how he came to be part of this...
Like me, he was raised religious...
I WAS CATHOLIC, SO... NOT *EXACTLY* THE SAME...
A LOT MORE RITUALS... AND *RULES*...

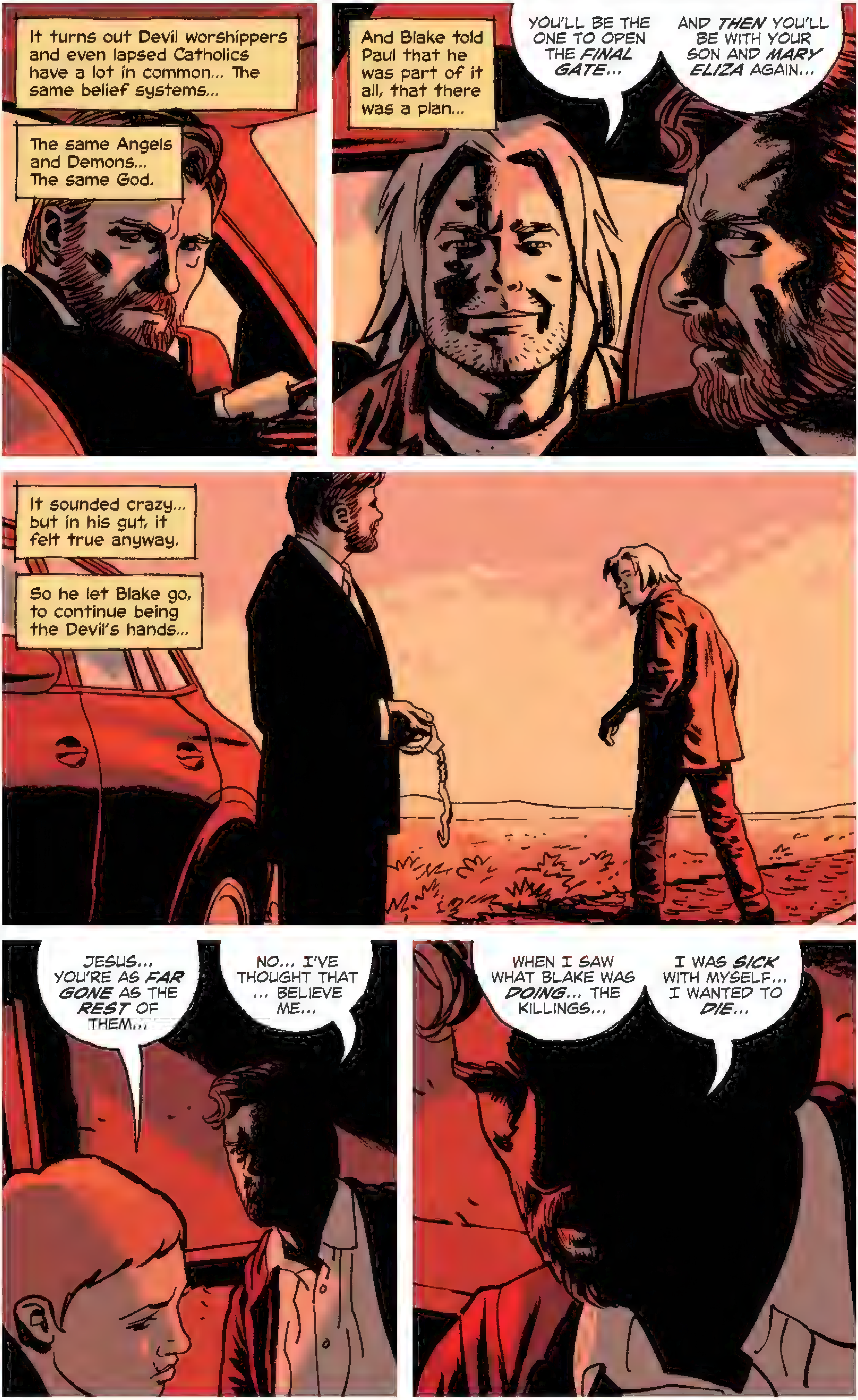

Paul had left the church after school.
CADET
CADET
CADET
CADET

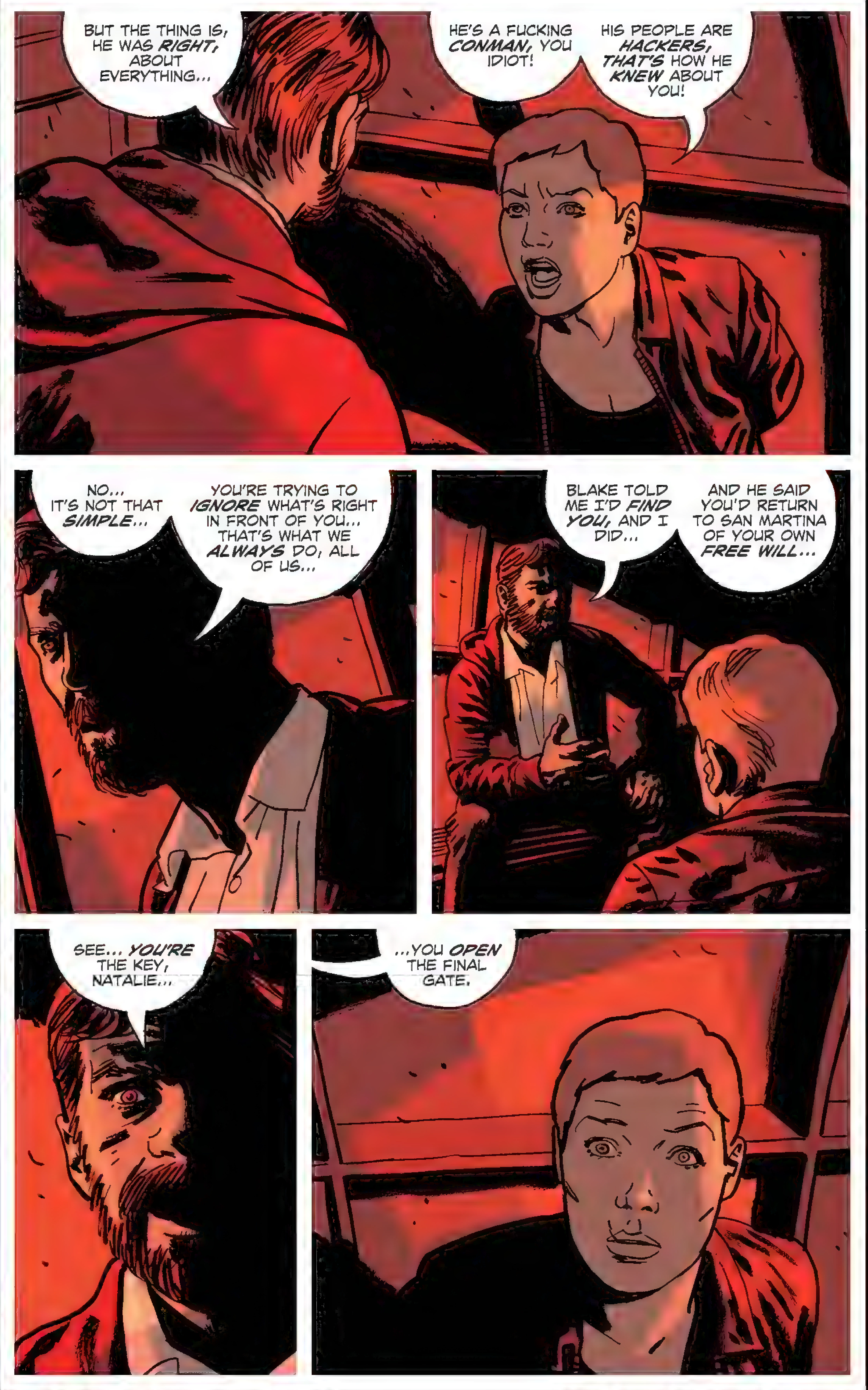

He didn't believe in God anymore, he thought...


But over the years as an FBI agent, he'd found himself in some hairy situations...
And in those moments, he still prayed...
GOD *PLEASE* LET ME GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE...
...PLEASE LET ME GET HOME TO MY *FAMILY*...
AUTO
SERVICE
AUTO REPAIR
FBI


And he was always drawn to occult crimes... Devil worshippers, cults, ritual killers...
SO MAYBE I NEVER *REALLY* STOPPED *BELIEVING* AT ALL, Y'KNOW? DEEP DOWN.
And what did Agent West believe?
That we were in the End Times.
It started after his wife and son died, but really it was something he'd been feeling inside for a long time...
This sense of an ending, coming soon.
And it was only when his last piece of happiness was taken away that he could actually face it.
Mary Eliza West 1975-2022
Stephen Francis West 2010-2022
Mankind was doomed, the signs were everywhere...
Floods, fires, hurricanes, earthquakes... Wars...
Life was just disaster after disaster, all around the globe...
Nuclear Threats
WILDFIRE KILLS THOUSANDS
RUSSIANS INVADE
MASSACR
PLAYGROU
Tsunami Destroys Coastal Village


Yet people still talked about the future, bought houses, had babies... As if there was any point to it all.
AND I GET IT... BECAUSE WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN IT'S THE *END* OF THE *WORLD?*
DO YOU GO TO *WORK?* DO YOU FOLLOW THE *RULES?*
HOW DO YOU CARE ABOUT *ANYTHING,* IF YOU ACCEPT THAT IT'S *ALL* ABOUT TO BE *OVER?*
And this is how he had found his way to Blake Snyder, to someone else who understood.
He'd arrested Blake a year ago in Arizona...
A fugitive from a mental home, with supposed connections to an occult killing in Mexico...
But somehow, Blake knew everything about Agent West...
...YOU'VE BEEN LOST SINCE THEY *DIED,* HAVEN'T YOU?
YOUR WIFE AND *SON?*
WHAT THE *FUCK* DID YOU JUST *SAY* TO ME?
IT'S *OKAY,* PAUL... I'M HERE TO *HELP* YOU.


It turns out Devil worshippers and even lapsed Catholics have a lot in common... The same belief systems...
The same Angels and Demons... The same God.
And Blake told Paul that he was part of it all, that there was a plan...
YOU'LL BE THE ONE TO OPEN THE *FINAL GATE*...
AND *THEN* YOU'LL BE WITH YOUR SON AND *MARY ELIZA* AGAIN...
It sounded crazy... but in his gut, it felt true anyway.
So he let Blake go, to continue being the Devil's hands...
JESUS... YOU'RE AS *FAR GONE* AS THE *REST* OF THEM...
NO... I'VE THOUGHT THAT ... BELIEVE ME...
WHEN I SAW WHAT BLAKE WAS *DOING*... THE KILLINGS...
I WAS *SICK* WITH MYSELF... I WANTED TO *DIE*...


BUT THE THING IS, HE WAS *RIGHT,* ABOUT EVERYTHING...
HE'S A FUCKING *CONMAN,* YOU IDIOT!
HIS PEOPLE ARE *HACKERS, THAT'S* HOW HE *KNEW* ABOUT YOU!
NO... IT'S NOT THAT *SIMPLE*...
YOU'RE TRYING TO *IGNORE* WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU... THAT'S WHAT WE *ALWAYS* DO, ALL OF US...
BLAKE TOLD ME I'D *FIND YOU,* AND I DID...
AND HE SAID YOU'D RETURN TO SAN MARTINA OF YOUR OWN *FREE WILL*...
SEE... *YOU'RE* THE KEY, NATALIE...
...YOU *OPEN* THE FINAL GATE.

It's strangely quiet in that cave where Blake said we'd been taken all those years ago...
So I can still hear it, the air raid siren from town...
It goes off every few minutes.
And when it does, Blake's people stop and listen...
Then they nod meaningfully and continue with their work...
YOU *FEEL* IT, DON'T YOU...?

...THAT SENSE OF *DÉJÀ VU?*
LIKE AN ECHO OF A *HAND* WRAPPED AROUND YOUR *SOUL.*
BLAKE, YOU FUCKING *PSYCHO*... GET ME *OUT* OF HERE.
OH DON'T *WORRY,* NATALIE... WE'LL *ALL* BE GETTING OUT OF HERE *SOON*...
THERE'S A DOOR TO HELL DEEP IN THIS CAVE, AND MY FRIENDS ARE OPENING IT RIGHT NOW...
THEN THE DEMONS WILL COME FOR *US*... YOU AND ME...
AND WE'LL BREAK THE *LAST SEAL*...
AND THE *END OF DAYS* WILL ARRIVE.
BRENDAN... DON'T *LISTEN* TO THIS ASSHOLE...
HE'S FUCKING *CRAZY*...

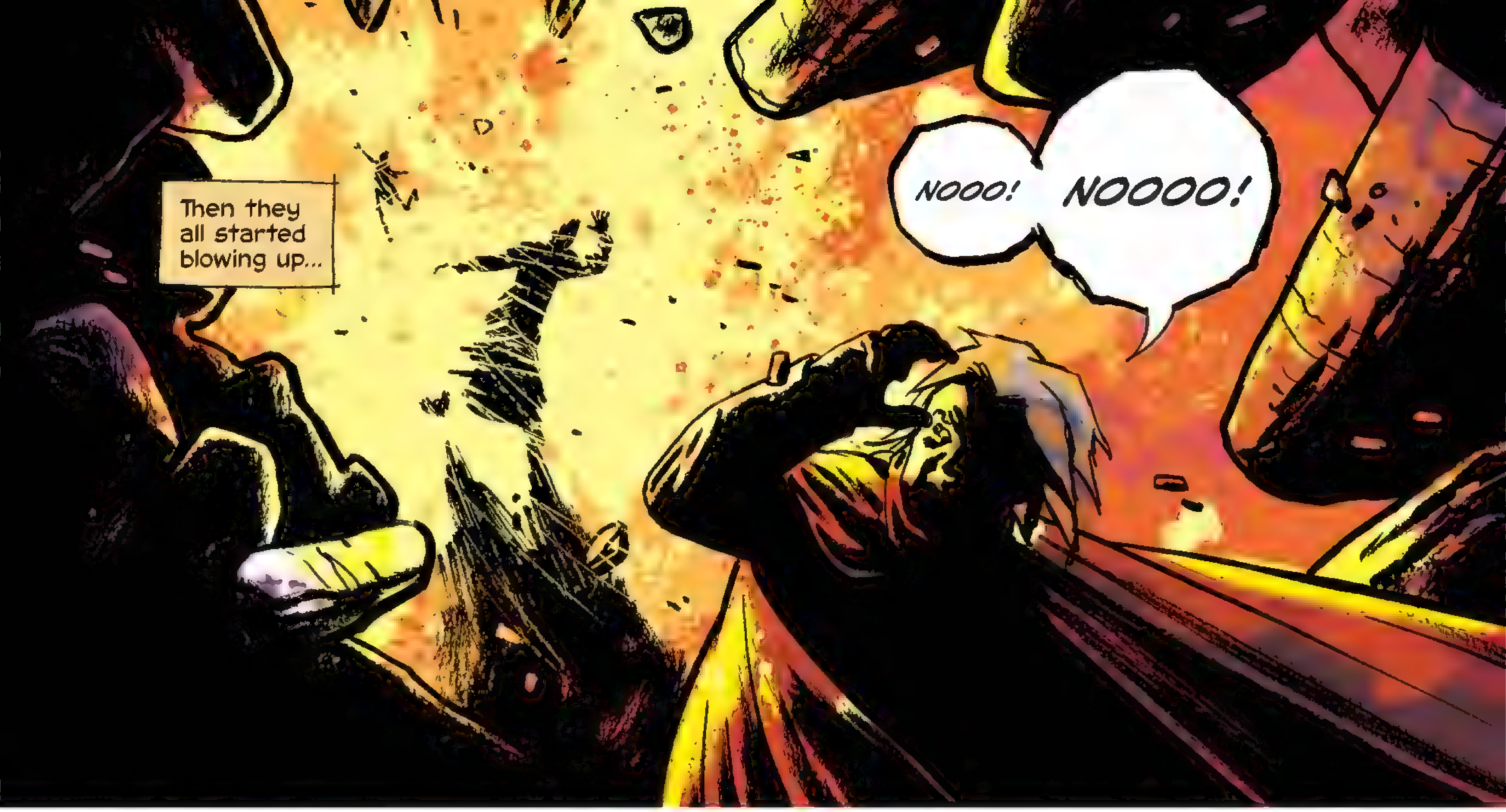
NO, I DON'T THINK HE *IS*, NATALIE... I'M *SORRY*...
THIS IS HOW IT *HAS* TO BE...
BRENDAN! I'M YOUR *SISTER!*
I'M SORRY.
GET HIM OUT OF HERE...
OF COURSE... WE'LL GO CHECK ON THE PROGRESS IN THE *TUNNEL*...
COME ON, FOOL...
BRENDAN!
DON'T LEAVE ME HERE!

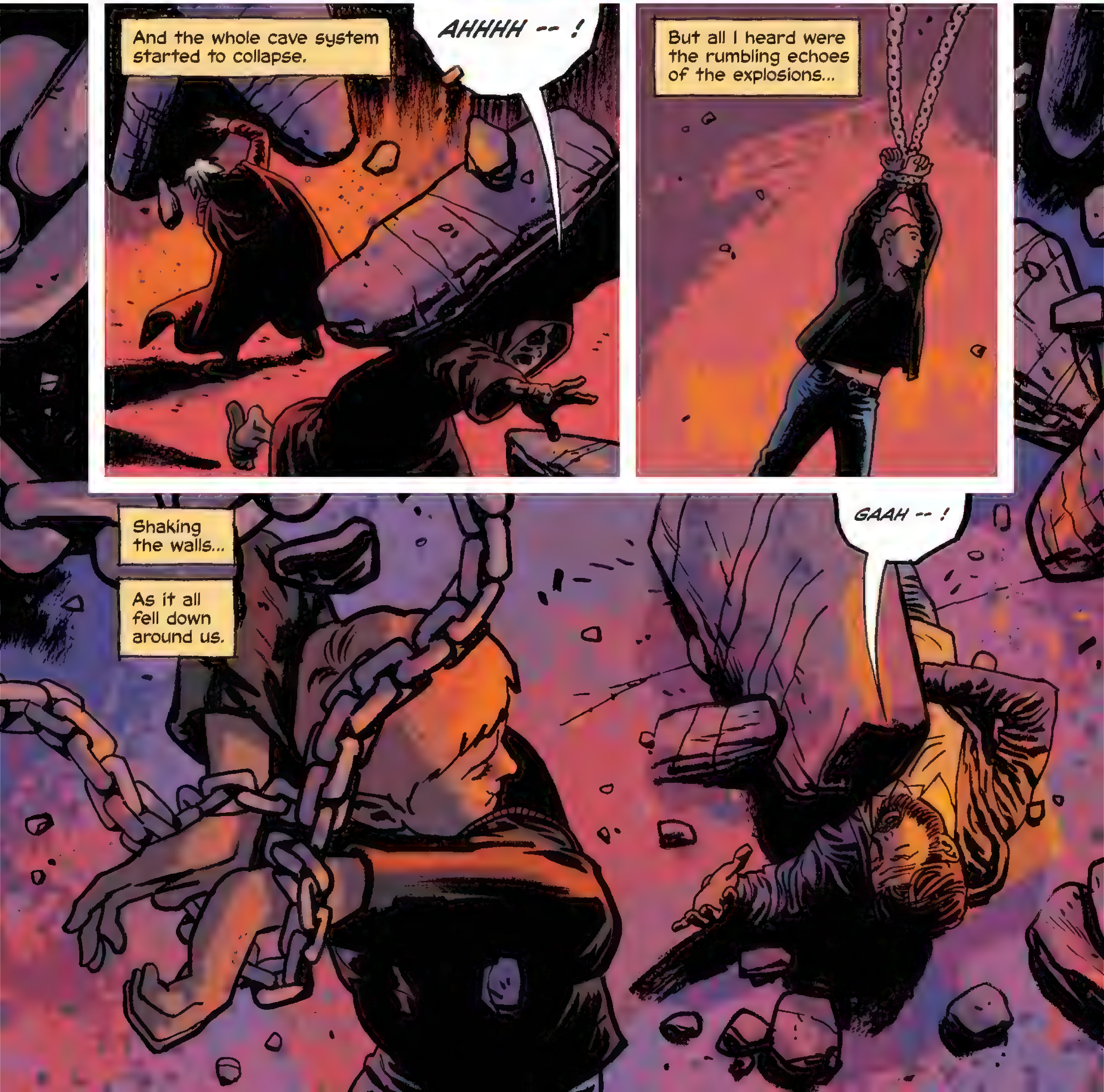
NATALIE... CALM DOWN... IT'S ALL GOING TO BE *OKAY*...
WE'RE JUST FULFILLING OUR VOW.
WHAT FUCKING *VOW?*
WE WERE *PROMISED* TO THE *DEVIL* IN THIS CAVE... A LONG TIME AGO...
YOU HAVEN'T *FORGOTTEN* THAT, I KNOW YOU HAVEN'T.
I HAVEN'T *FORGOTTEN IT* BECAUSE IT NEVER *HAPPENED*...
NOTHING HAPPENED TO *ANY* OF US, BLAKE... WE MADE IT UP...
CHRIST... I REALLY FEEL *SORRY* FOR YOU...

IT MUST HAVE BEEN *SO HARD,* ALL YOUR LIFE...
NEVER UNDERSTANDING *WHY* EVERYTHING YOU *DID* WENT WRONG...
WHY ALL OF YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN A *MISERY,* TRYING TO BE A PART OF *THEIR* WORLD...
WHEN YOU'RE MEANT FOR SO MUCH MORE.
BLAKE, STOP THIS...
LET ME GO...
CAN YOU REALLY NOT SEE THE *SIGNS?*
DO YOU HEAR THAT SIREN OUT THERE?
IT'S ALL *COMING DOWN,* NATALIE... *TONIGHT*...
OPEN YOUR *EYES*... SEE THE REAL WORLD...
NOT THE ONE YOU *WANT*... BUT THE ONE THAT'S *ACTUALLY* THERE...

STRIP HER *NAKED* AND PREPARE HER FOR THE DEMON...
I'M GOING DOWN TO THE DOORWAY, TO *WELCOME* HIM...
I'M SORRY FOR THIS...
NO, YOU AREN'T... YOU JUST STILL FEEL *GUILTY*, THAT'S ALL.
LISTEN TO ME, THEY'RE PLANTING *DYNAMITE* DOWN THERE...
AND WHEN NO *DEMON* COMES THROUGH THE HOLE THEY BLOW OPEN, YOU KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN?
BLAKE IS JUST GOING TO KILL ME HIMSELF AND SAY *HE'S* THE DEMON...
STOP *TALKING*...
HE'S A CONMAN, CONNING *HIMSELF*... YOU HAVE TO SEE THAT.
NO, THE *SIGNS* ARE HERE, THE WORLD IS *UNRAVELLING* – THAT'S WHAT *YOU'RE* NOT SEEING...

IT'S TIME FOR IT ALL TO *END.*
NOW JUST STOP *STRUGGLING* AND LET ME –
FUCK YOU!
What happened next, I'm partly guessing at...
But some of it my brother told me, later...
There was a problem with the dynamite, old nitro is unstable...
And one of them went off when it was being placed...


Then they all started blowing up...
NOOO!
NOOOO!


And the whole cave system started to collapse.
AHHHH -- !
But all I heard were the rumbling echoes of the explosions...
Shaking the walls...
As it all fell down around us.
GAAH -- !

...FUHH...
BRENDAN... OH GOD...
...NATA... LEE...

IT'S OKAY, BUDDY... YOU'RE OKAY...
I'VE GOT YOU...
...BUT... NO... WHAT ABOUT... WHAT...
C'MON... WE *HAVE* TO GET OUT OF HERE...
...
NO! NOOO!
SOMEBODY STOP THEM!
STOP THEM!

GYAAH -- !
NO!
STAY WITH ME...
...KKKK...
GET THEM!!!
COME ON, BRENDAN...
YOU CAN DO THIS...

NATALIE BURNS IN HELL

We only make it about a mile.
THEY MUST'VE HIT THE *GAS TANK*...
COME ON, WE HAVE TO *WALK*, BRENDAN...
...JUST LEAVE ME HERE...
NO... COME ON...
WE'RE GETTING *OUT* OF THIS...
...HHH...
But are we?
I mean, I can say the words, but in my gut I know I don't mean them.
I keep hearing that damn siren echoing from the town...
And voices shouting... People looking for us...
Lights moving in the trees...

And I don't know... maybe I'm like Agent West...
Maybe my religious upbringing is just programmed into me too deep...
But it sure as hell feels like the End of Days tonight.
And it feels like I've been looking away from it for a long time... denying what's happening...
That the world is on fire...
And the lunatics are cheering on the flames.
HEY... WAIT...

BRENDAN, LOOK... IT'S THE *CABIN*...
...WHAT...?
...WHAT CABIN...?
COME ON, WE CAN HIDE IN HERE...
...OW... ***STOP***...
...AND WE WERE ON THE ***PORCH***, AND THERE WAS A MAN IN THE TREES... AND DAD ***YELLED***...
YOU DON'T ***REMEMBER*** ANY OF THIS?
...I'M COLD... NATALIE...
THEY'RE STILL ***OUT THERE***...
I CAN'T START A ***FIRE*** YET.

GOD, YOU *REALLY* DON'T REMEMBER THIS PLACE?
WE WERE ALL *SO HAPPY* HERE... BEFORE EVERYTHING...
BRENDAN?
OH... BRENDAN...
I'M SORRY.
I sit with him for a long time, hearing the distant siren... and the voices in the forest, still searching...
And then a thought hits me...
About this guy I used to work with in San Francisco... Harold.

Harold believed in magic... And every Sunday he would walk in a circle chanting a spell from John Dee's notebook...
To try to call the stone from the sky.
I remember Harold chiding me when I laughed at him for wasting all that time... Reminding me words have power.
All those spells did something for him, even if I didn't see it.
And he was right, words do have power... We see that every day now...
We see it so much that we can't even really see it anymore...
How much the things we say make the world.

I wonder if what we did back then, all the kids like me who told these crazy lies...
And like with Jesus and the fish, our lies multiplied and fed the world...
What if our words, echoing from then to now, was like a spell we were casting...
And then another thought hits me... If I do live through this night, if the world keeps spinning, even off its axis...
I'm surrounded by dead bodies... Here, back in that cave...
And no one will believe I wasn't part of whatever happened out there.
It's such a dirty trick that I almost want to laugh...

But I don't.
I just hold on to my brother's dead hand, and I wait to see if the dawn will come.

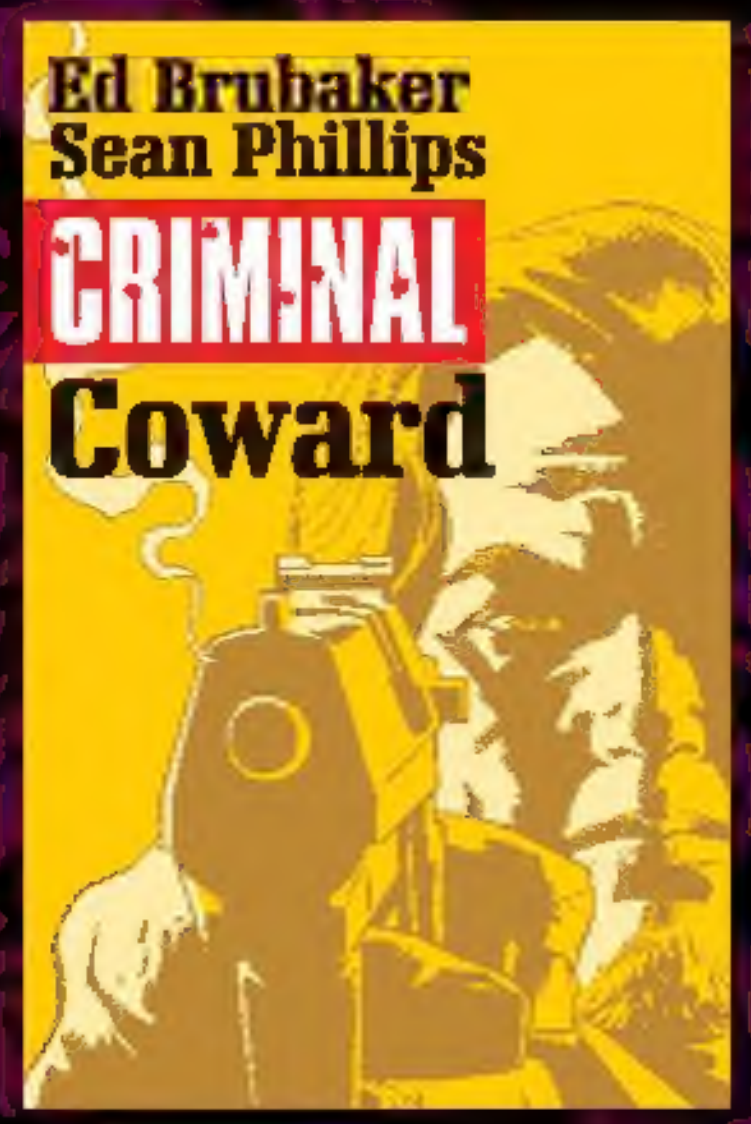
FOR MELANIE

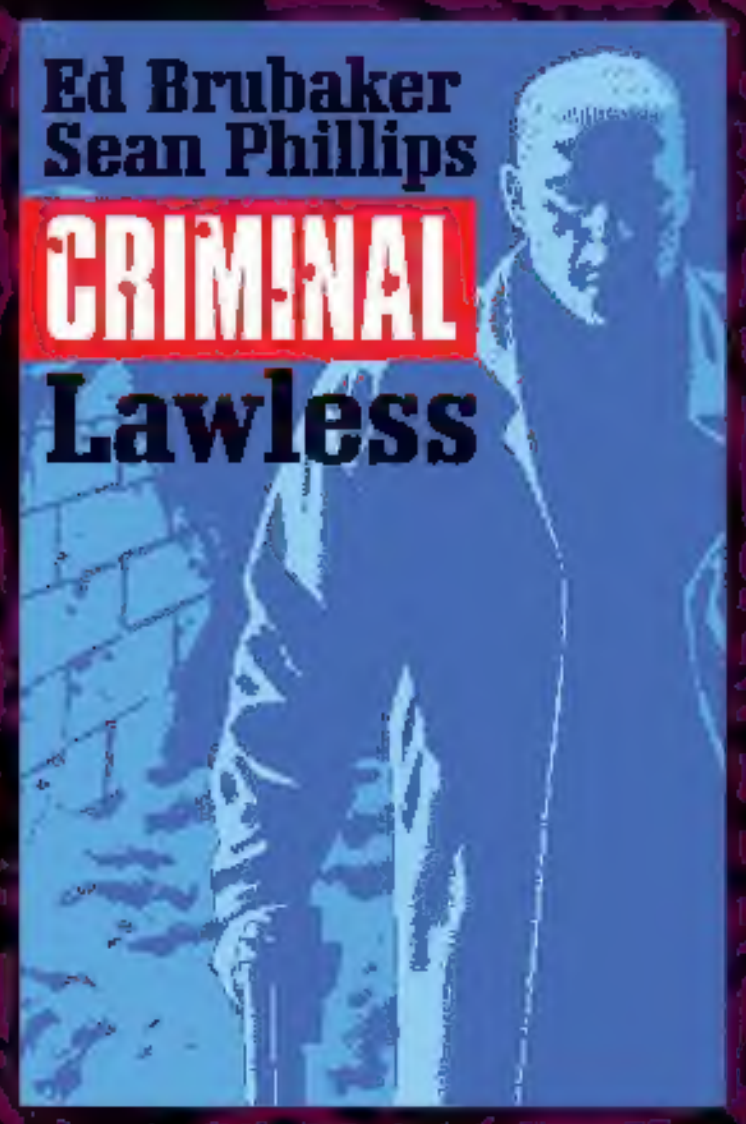
AND FOR MORE FROM BRUBAKER AND PHILLIPS

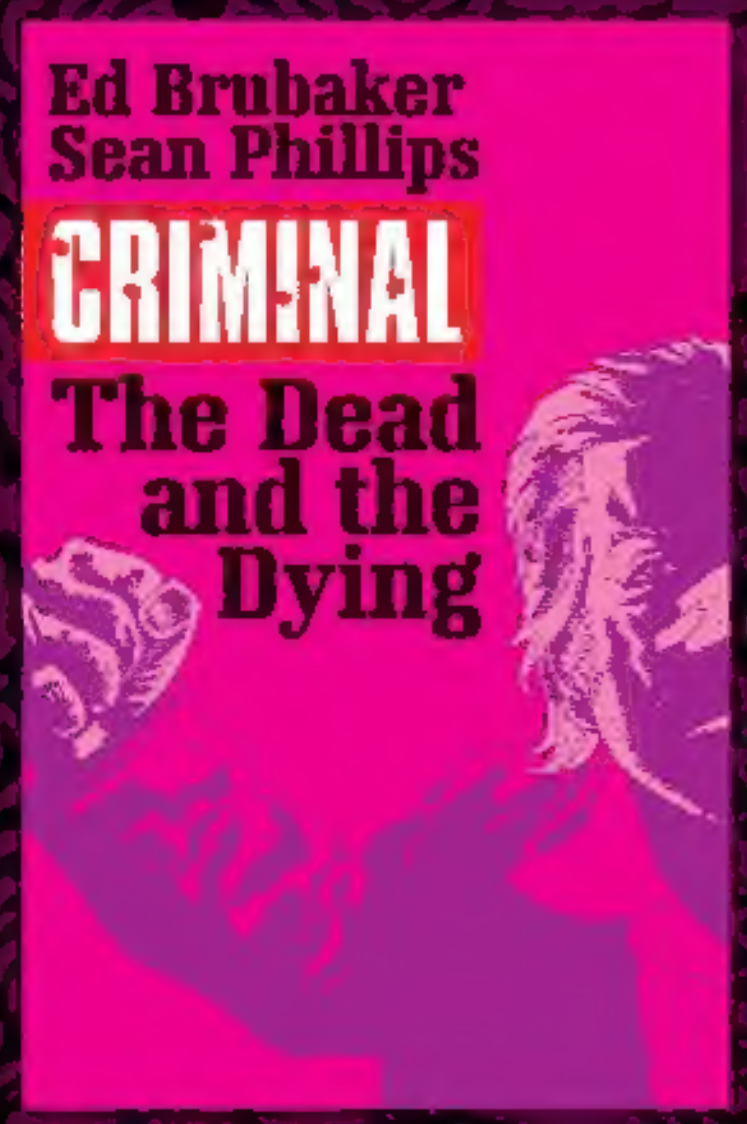
"SEAN PHILLIPS AND ED BRUBAKER REPRESENT THE GOLD STANDARD FOR COMICS NOIR - BRUTAL, BEAUTIFUL AND BEST."

— IAN RANKIN,

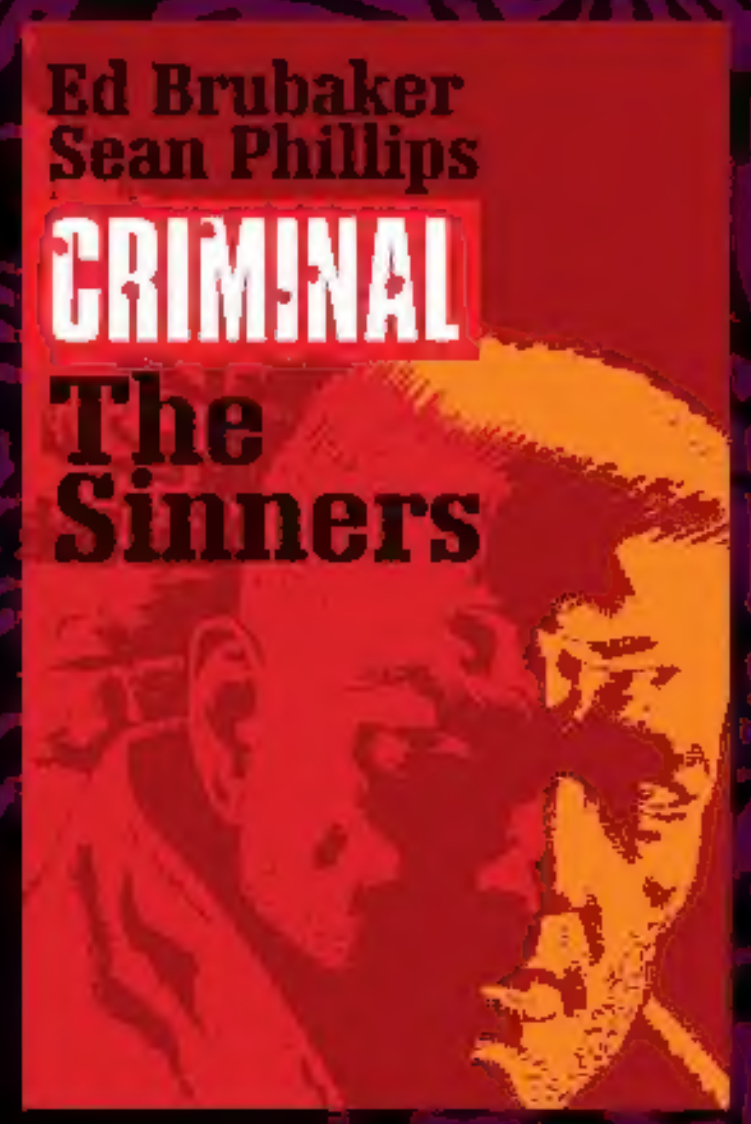
AUTHOR OF THE JOHN REBUS NOVELS


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
Coward


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
Lawless


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
The Dead and the Dying

Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
Bad Night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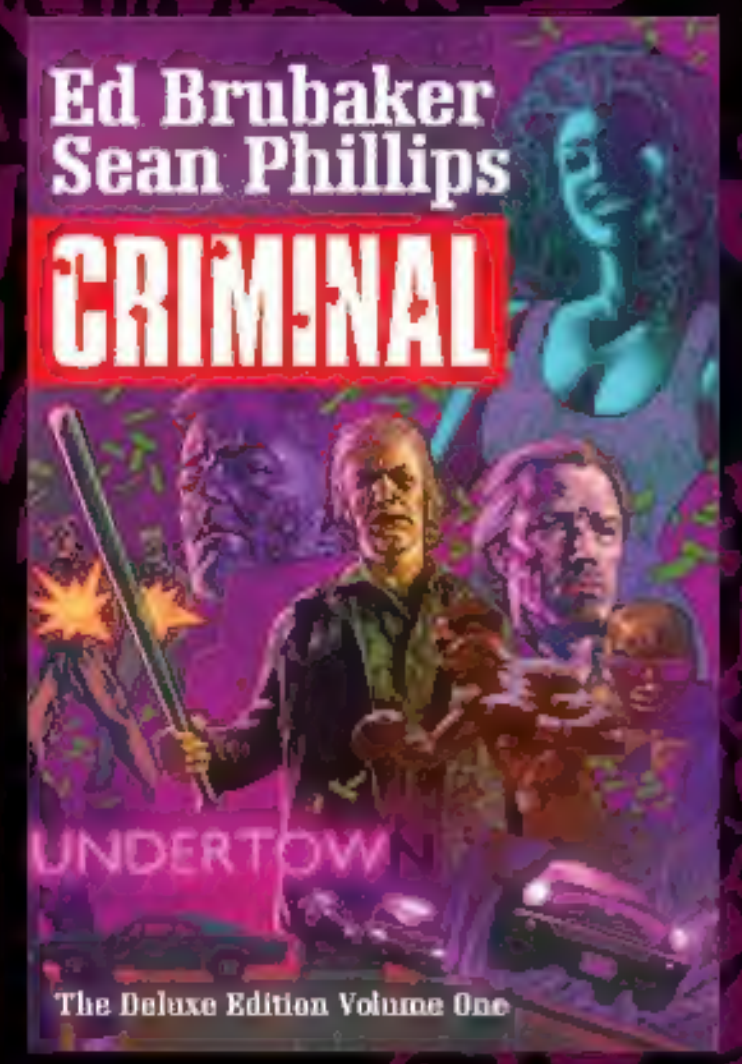
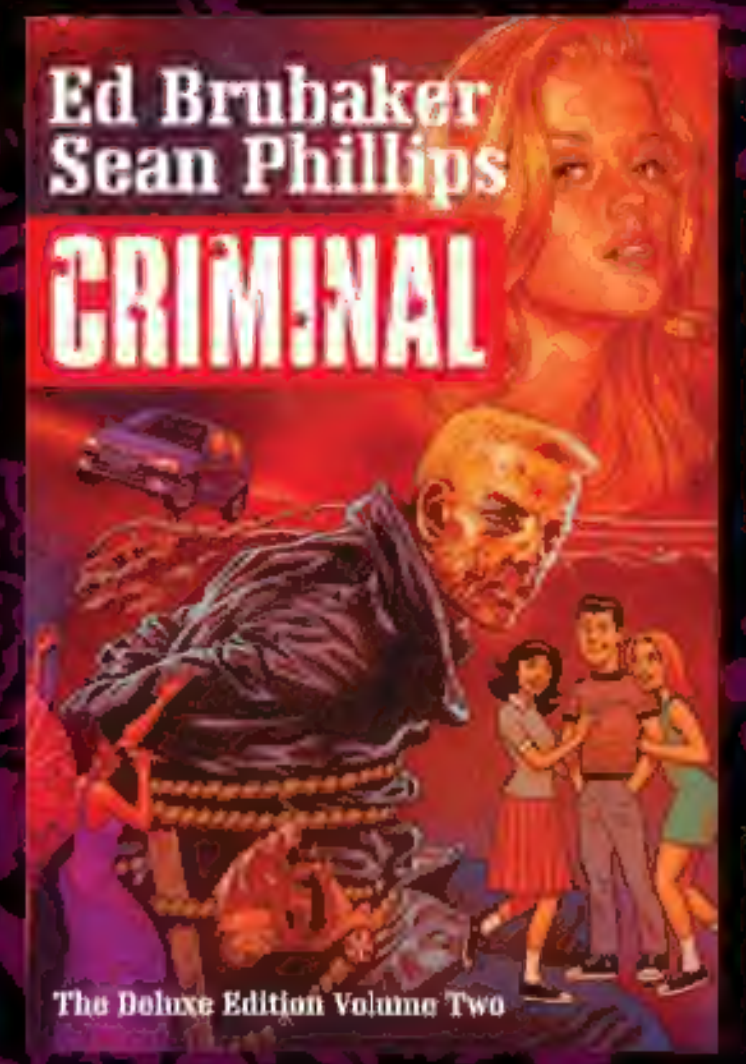
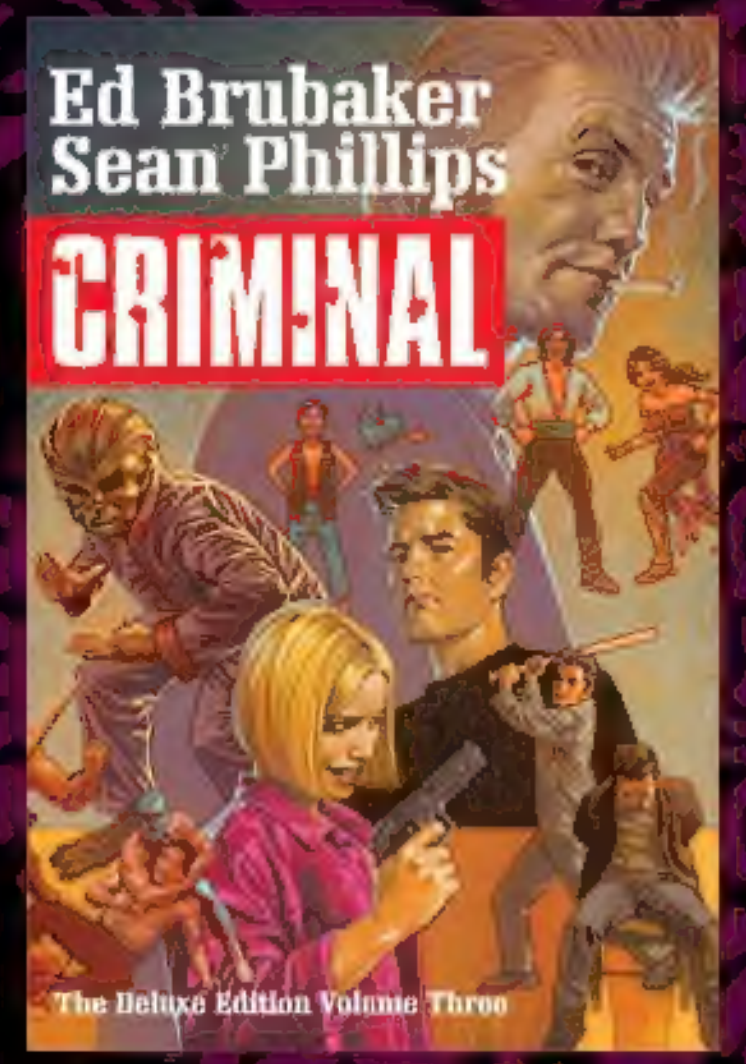
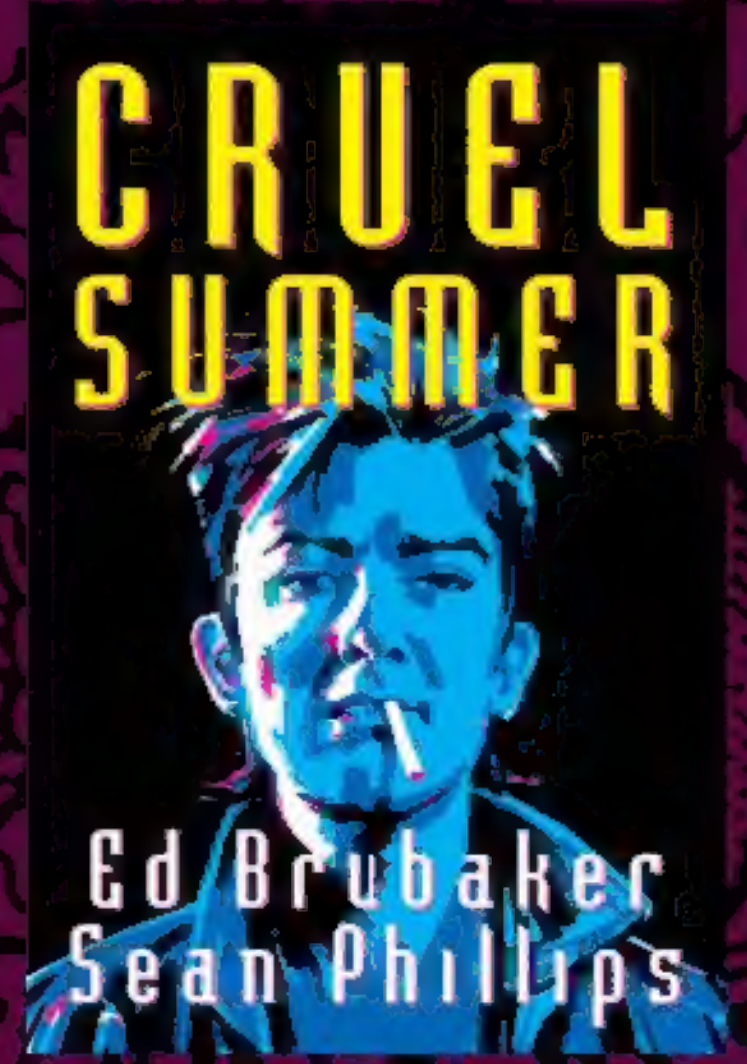
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
The Sinners


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
UNDERTOW
The Deluxe Edition Volume One

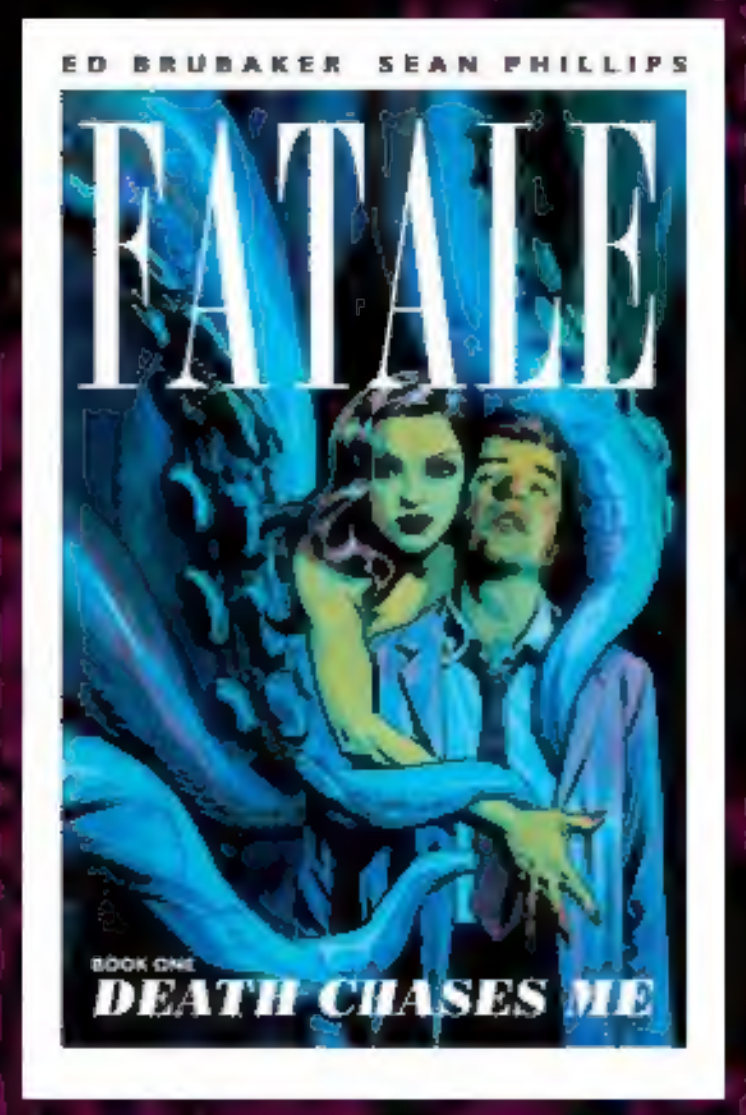

Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
The Deluxe Edition Volume Two


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
The Deluxe Edition Volume Three


CRUEL SUMMER
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

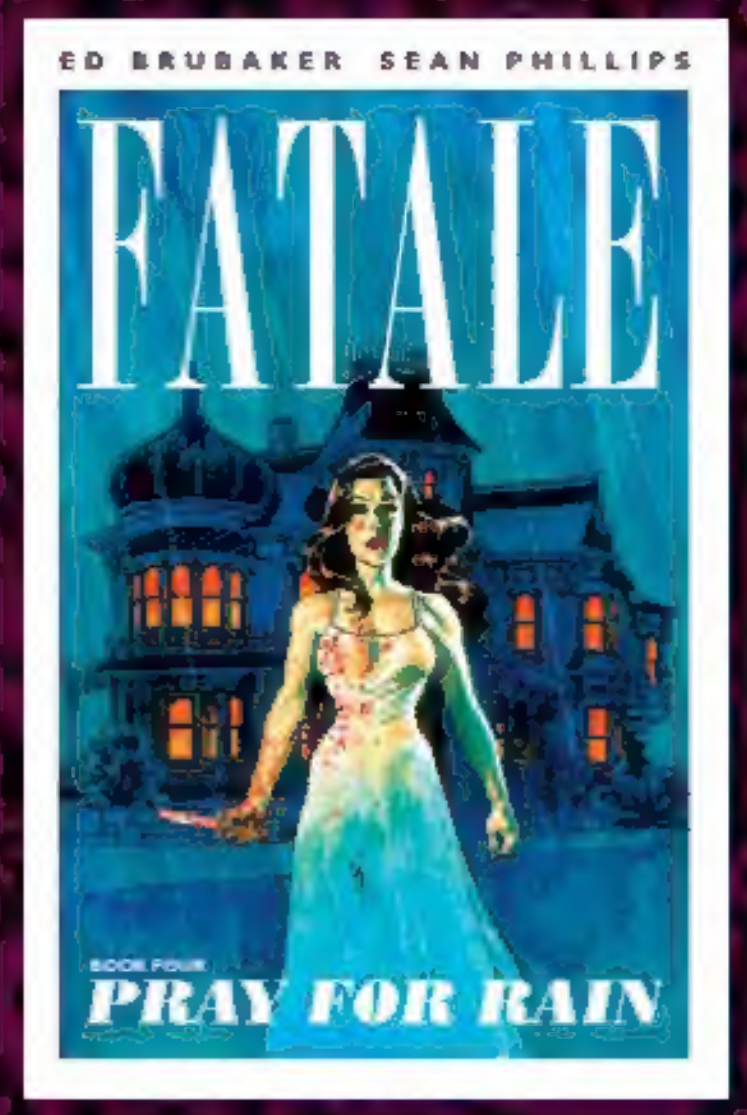
"CRIMINAL IS EQUAL PARTS JOHN WOO'S THE KILLER, STANLEY KUBRICK'S THE KILLING, AND FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S THE GODFATHER."

— PLAYBOY MAGAZINE


ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
BOOK ONE
DEATH CHASES ME

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
BOOK TWO
THE DEVIL'S BUSINESS

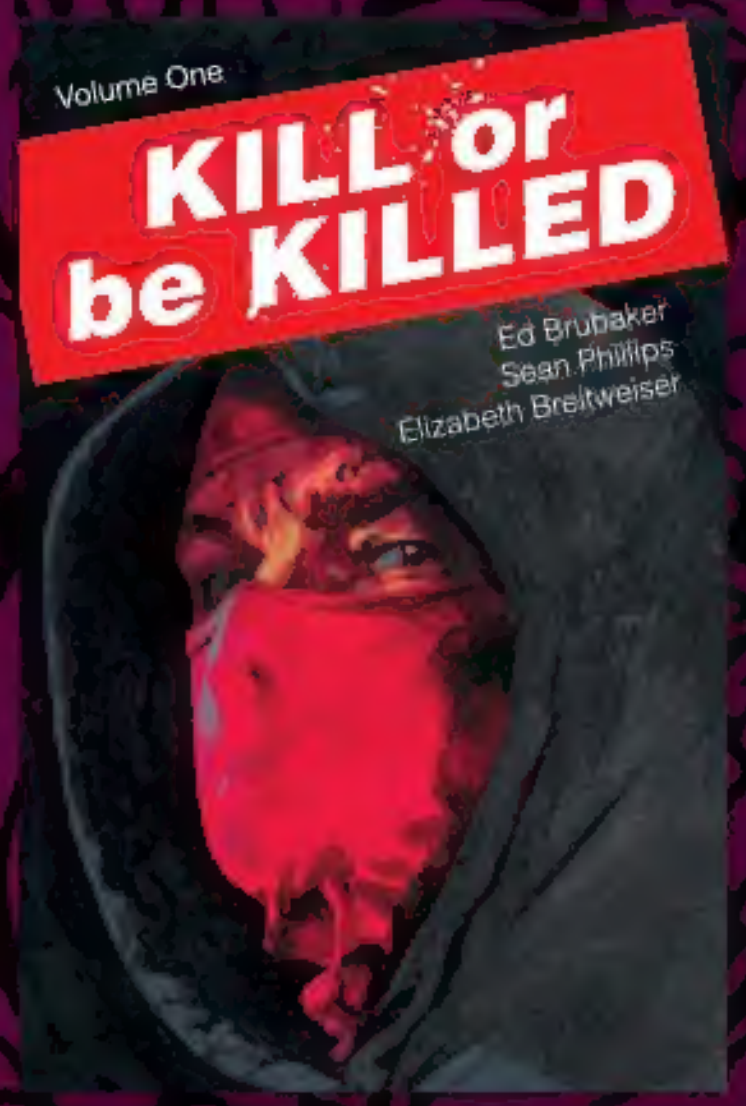
ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
BOOK THREE
WEST OF HELL

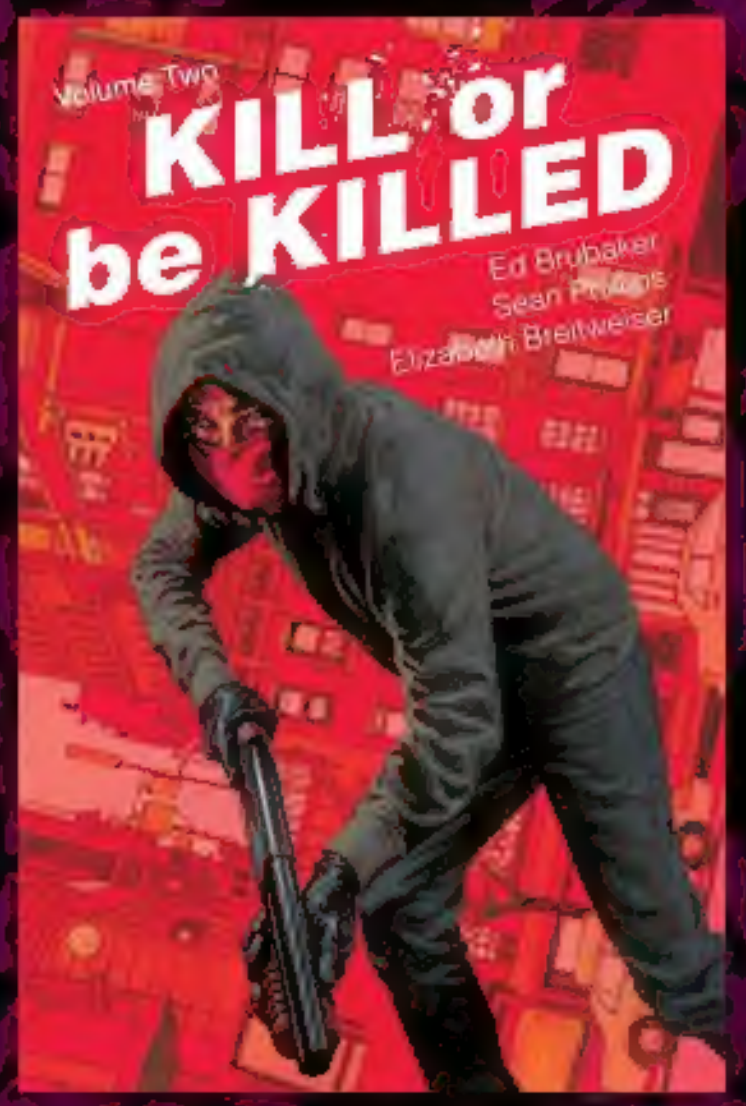

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
BOOK FOUR
PRAY FOR RAIN

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
BOOK FIVE
CURSE THE DEMON

"IMMORTALITY MAY BE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, BUT IT'S ONE THE INTOXICATING JO WIELDS WITH A BOUNDLESS GRACE IN THIS ADDICTIVE PAGE-TURNER."

— PUBLISHERS WEEKLY


Volume One
KILL or be KILLED
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
Elizabeth Breitweiser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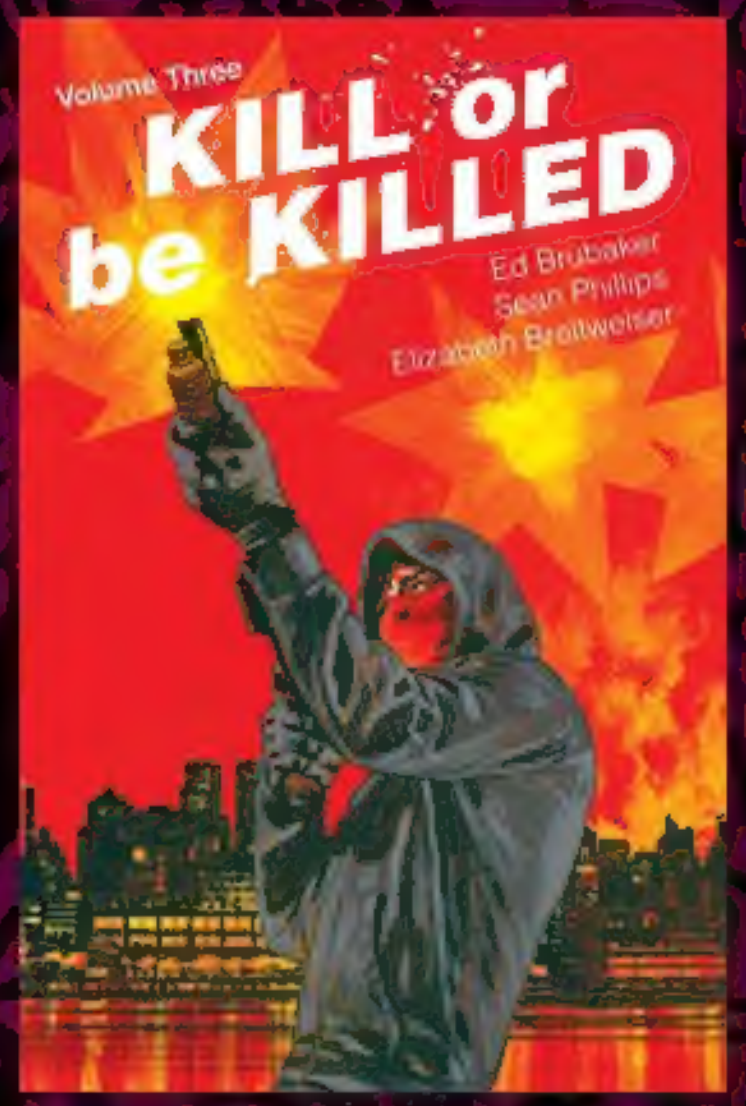
KILL or be KILLED


Volume Three
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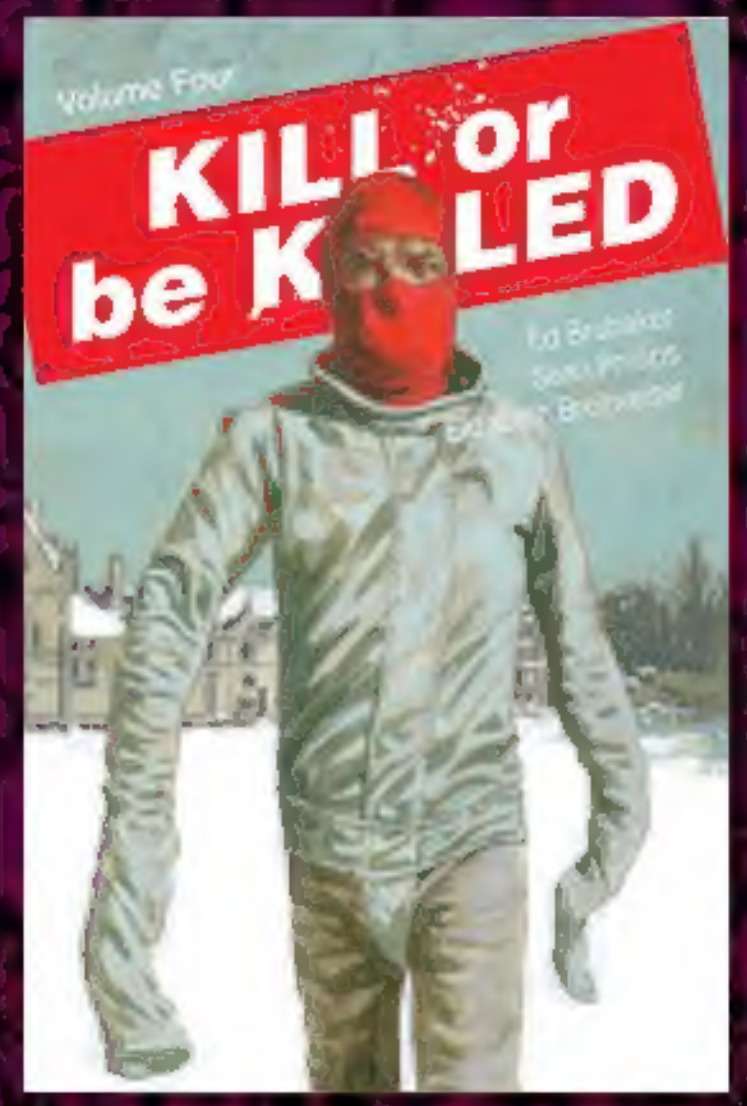
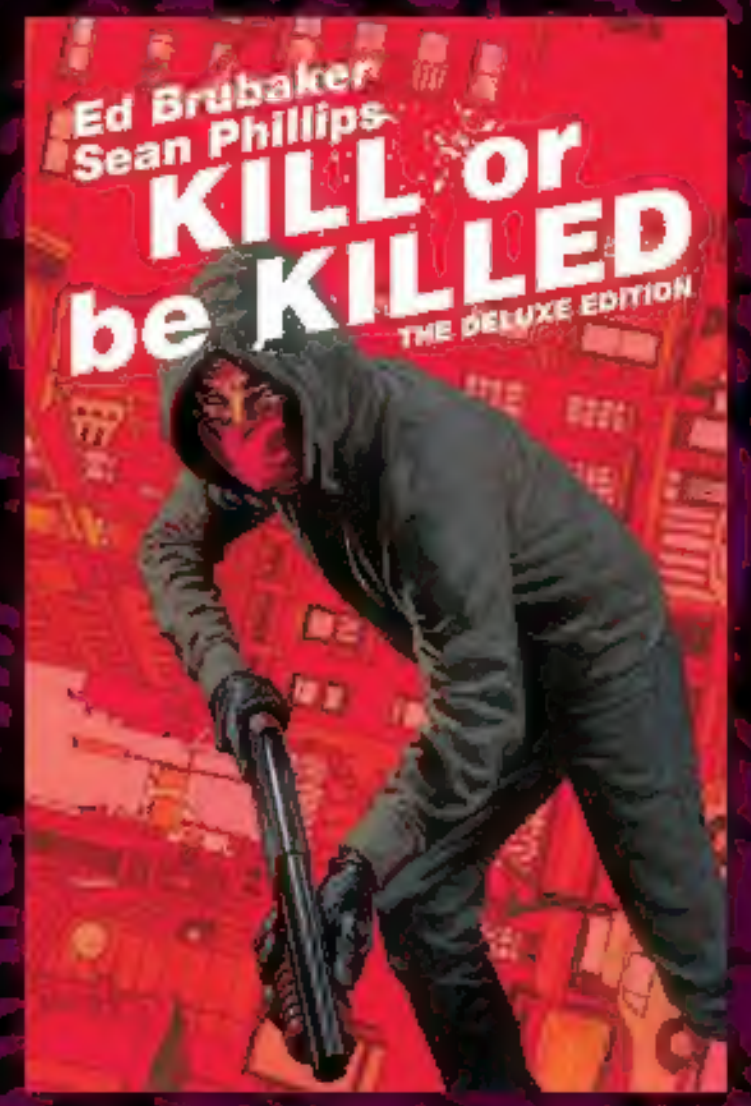
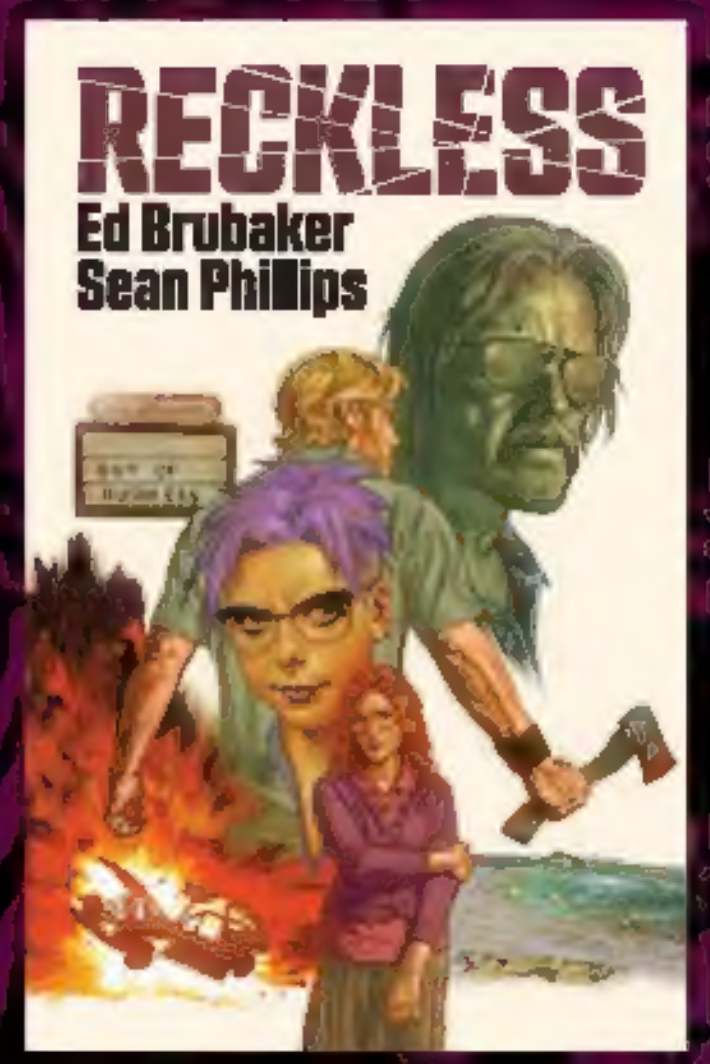
Sean Phillips
Elizabeth Breitweiser


Volume Four
KILL or be KILLED

"KILL OR BE KILLED IS MAGNIFICENT: A TRUE THING OF BEAUTY IN A TALE THAT IS SO DAMN UGLY."

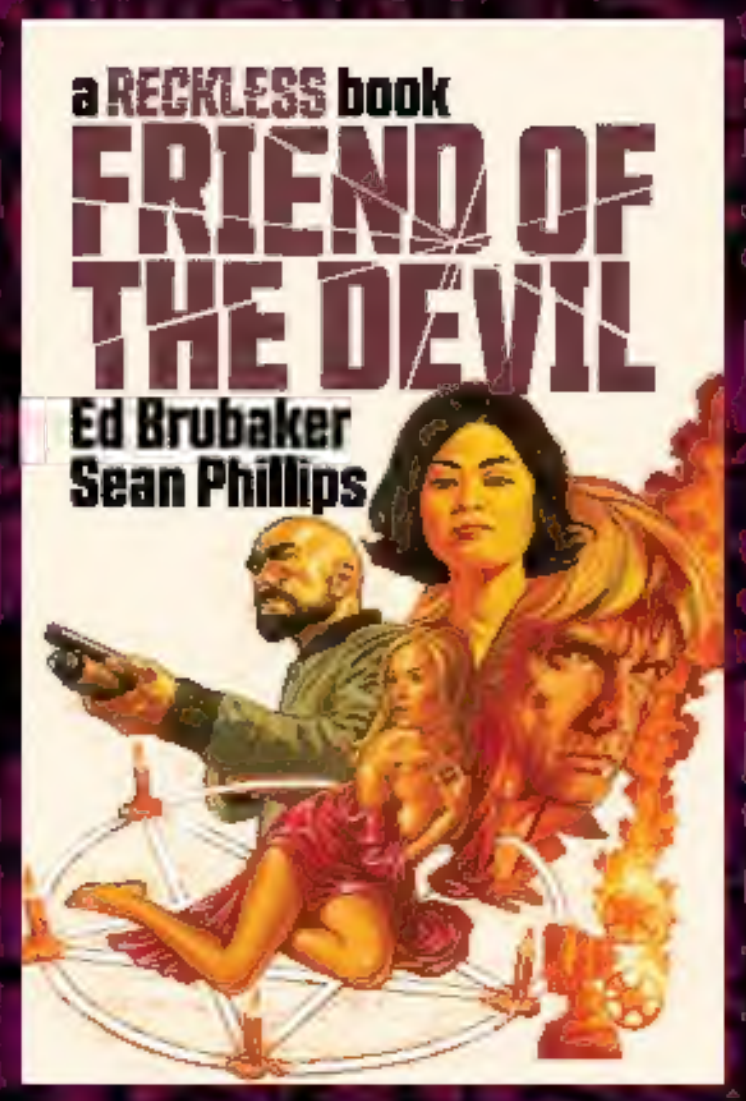
— NERDIST


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
KILL or be KILLED
THE DELUXE EDITION


RECKLESS
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

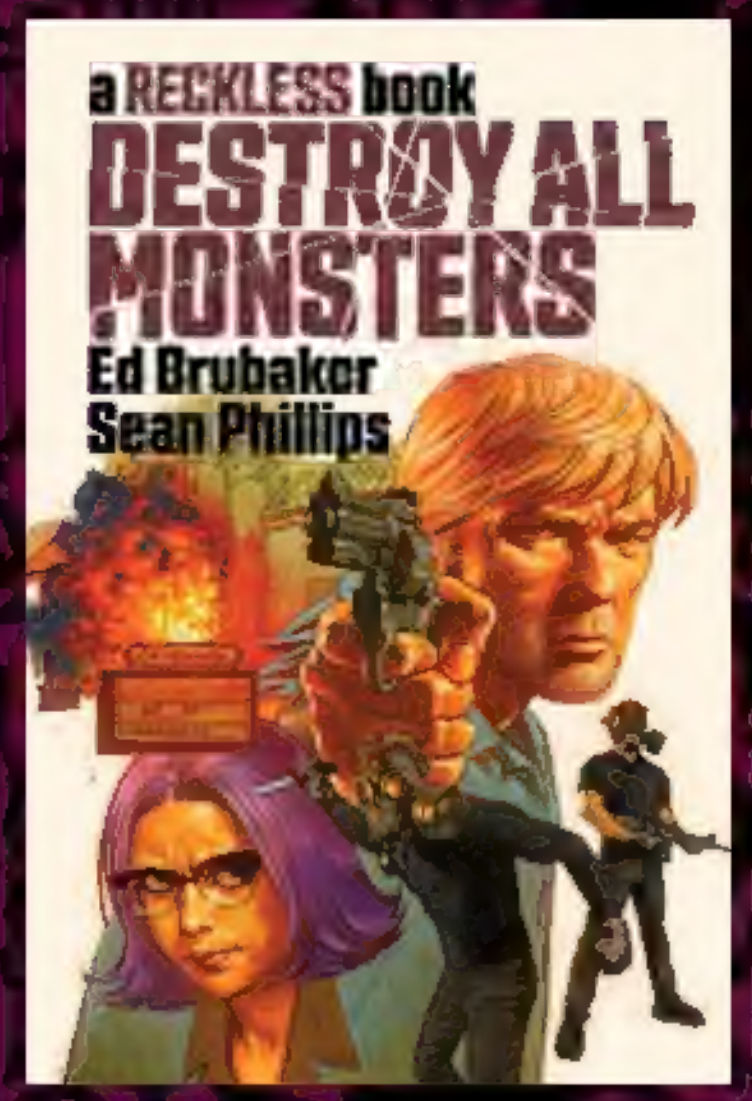
"OH MAN THIS BOOK PUSHED EVERY CRIME FICTION BUTTON FOR ME. BLISS."

— PATTON OSWALT


a RECKLESS book
FRIEND OF THE DEVIL
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

"I LOVE THIS BOOK."

— DAMON LINDELOF (LOST, HBO'S WATCHMEN)

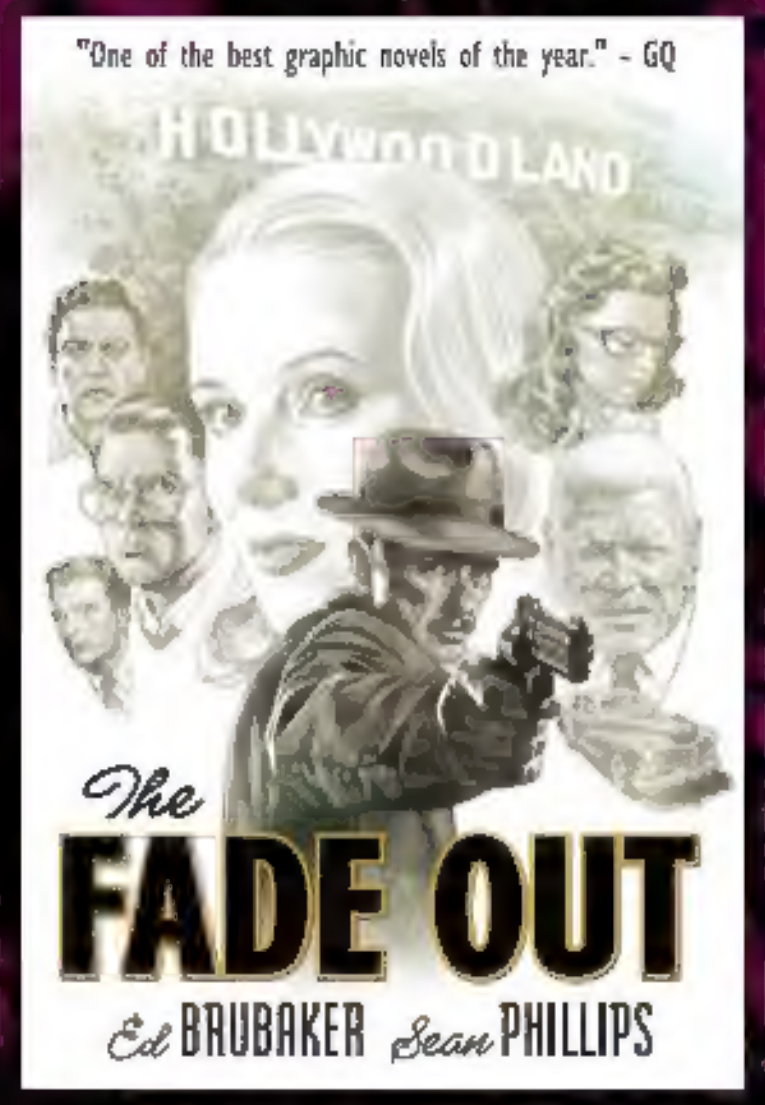

a RECKLESS book
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

"READING THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL IS LIKE WATCHING GREAT FILM NOIR. BRUBAKER IS THE MASTER OF PORTRAYING THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD, ESPECIALLY AS IT EFFECTS MIDDLE MANAGEMENT."

- KAREEM ABDUL-JABBAR

"ONE OF COMICS DREAM TEAMS DELIVERS THEIR BEST STORY YET IN THE FADE OUT, AN OLD HOLLYWOOD MURDER MYSTERY DRAPED AGAINST HUAC AND THE RED SCARE."

— NEW YORK MAGAZINE


"One of the best graphic novels of the year." - GQ
HOLLYWOODLAND
The FADE OUT
Ed BRUBAKER Sean PHILLIPS

EISNER AWARD WINNER — BEST LIMITED SERIES

Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
The Last of the Innocent

Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
CRIMINAL
Wrong Time Wrong Place

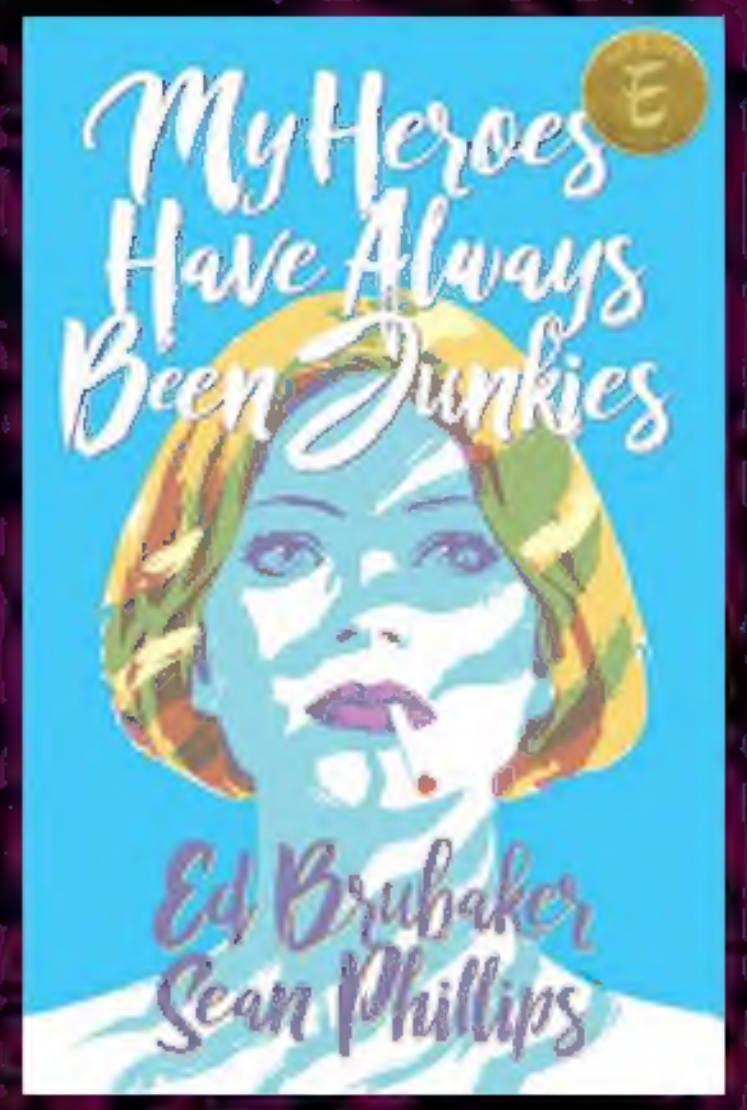
"THE POWERHOUSE CREATIVE TEAM OF BRUBAKER AND PHILLIPS COMBINE ELEMENTS OF NOIR AND COMING-OF-AGE STORIES IN THIS PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY COMPLEX DRAMA ABOUT DESPERATE MEN AND WOMEN DARING TO STRIVE FOR BETTER LIVES IN A VIOLENT WORLD WHERE HOPE AND LOVE ARE DANGEROUS LIABILITIES."

— LIBRARY JOURNAL

NEWSWEEK'S BEST COMIC BOOKS OF 2018

EISNER AWARD WINNER — BEST ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL

RINGO AWARD WINNER — BEST ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL


My Heroes Have Always Been Junkies
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

"FAR AND AWAY THE BEST WORK YET FROM ONE OF THE BEST TEAMS IN THE HISTORY OF COMICS."

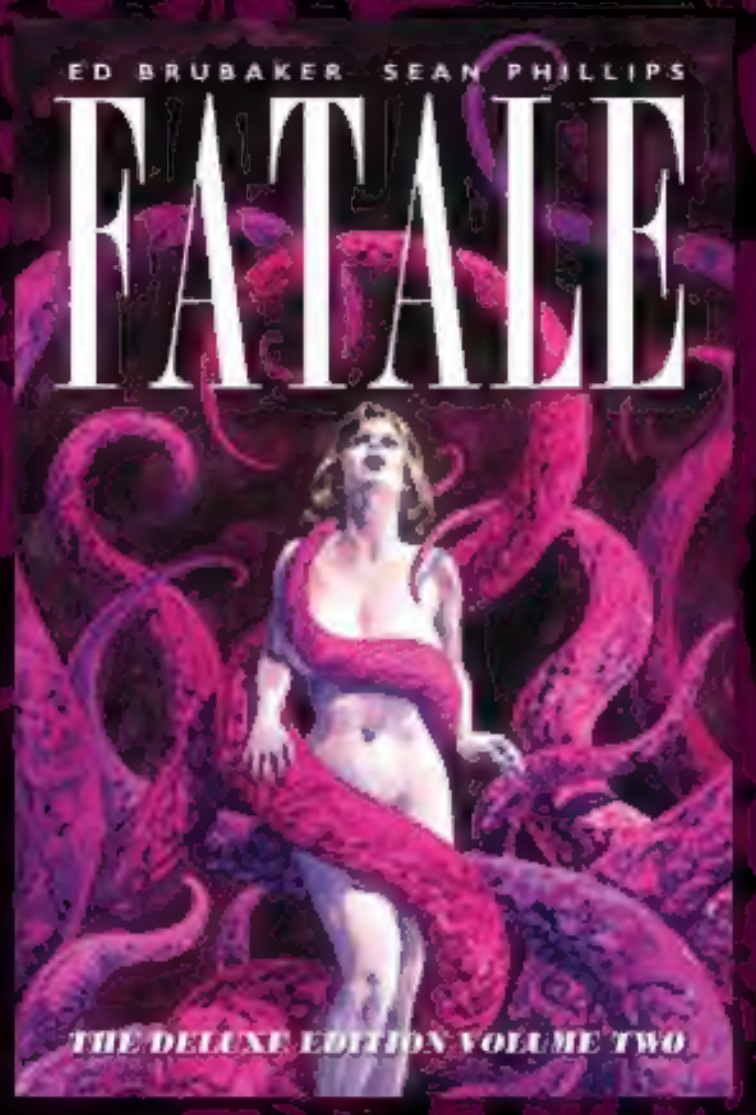
— BRIAN K. VAUGHAN (PAPER GIRLS, SAGA)

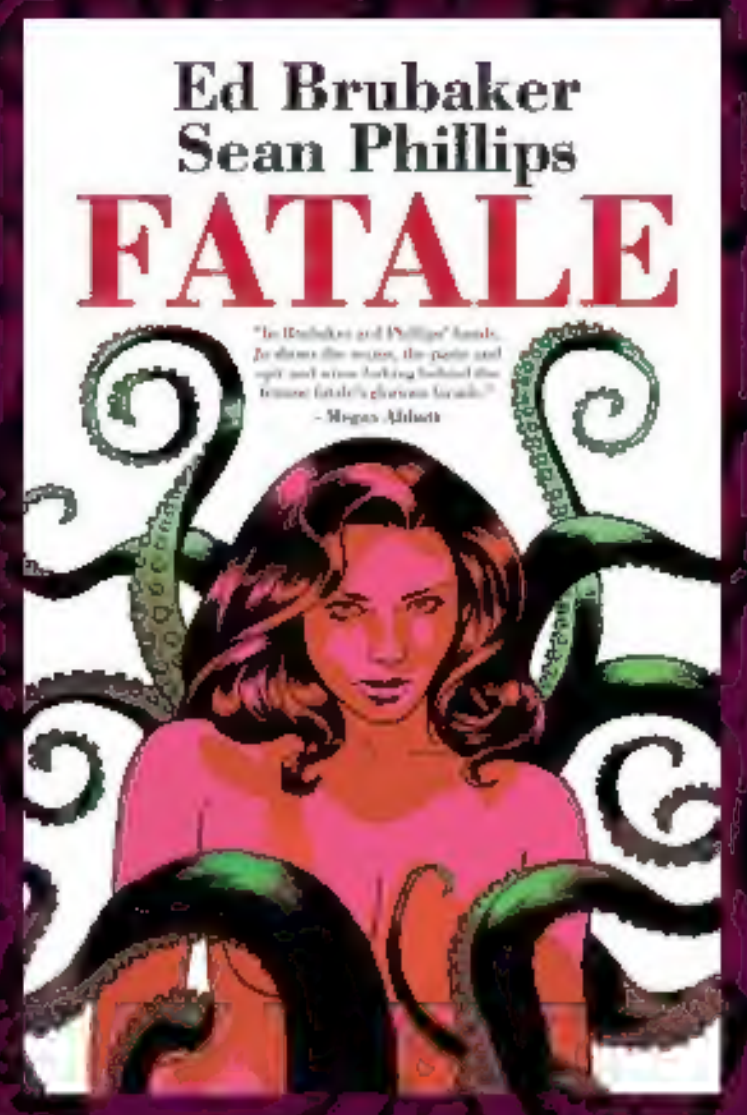
Bad Weekend
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

"EASILY ONE OF THE BEST COMICS OF THE 21ST CENTURY... A STORY THAT REFLECTS THE CROOKED SOUL OF OUR TIMES."

— TOM KING (MR MIRACLE, SHERIFF OF BABYLON)

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
THE DELUXE EDITION VOLUME ONE

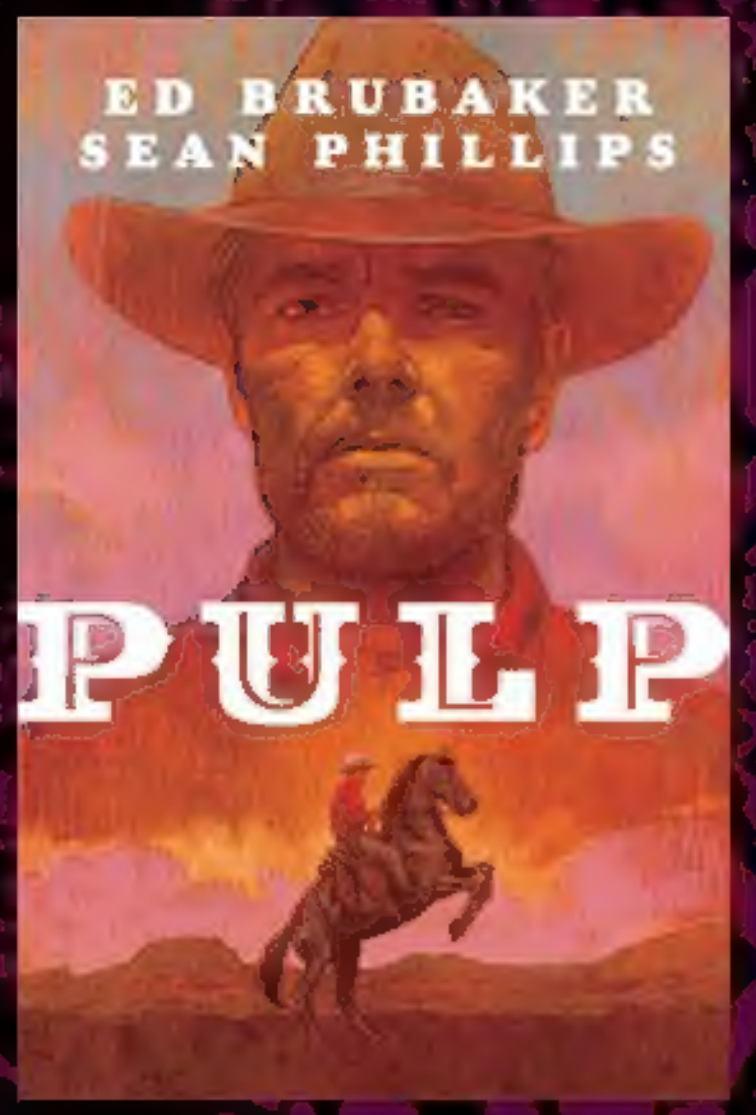

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS
FATALE
THE DELUXE EDITION VOLUME TWO


Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips
FATALE

night fever
ed brubaker
sean phillips

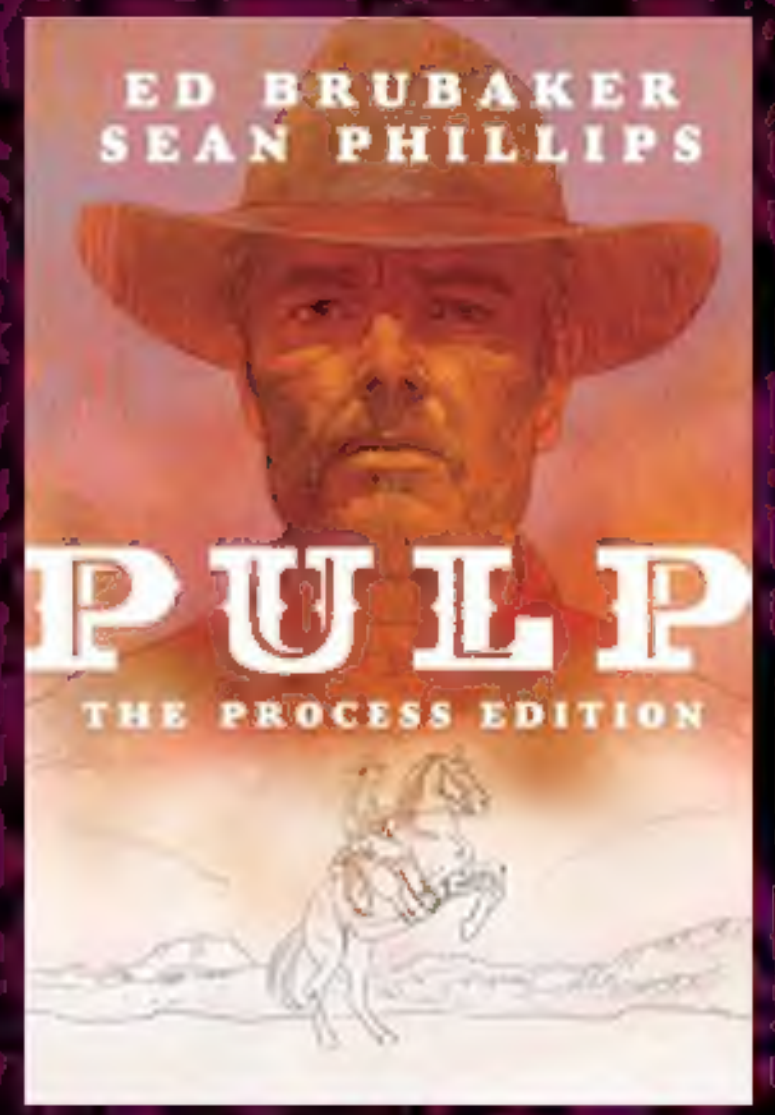
"A TAUT, RIVETING STORY, AS DISTURBING AS IT IS SATISFYING..."

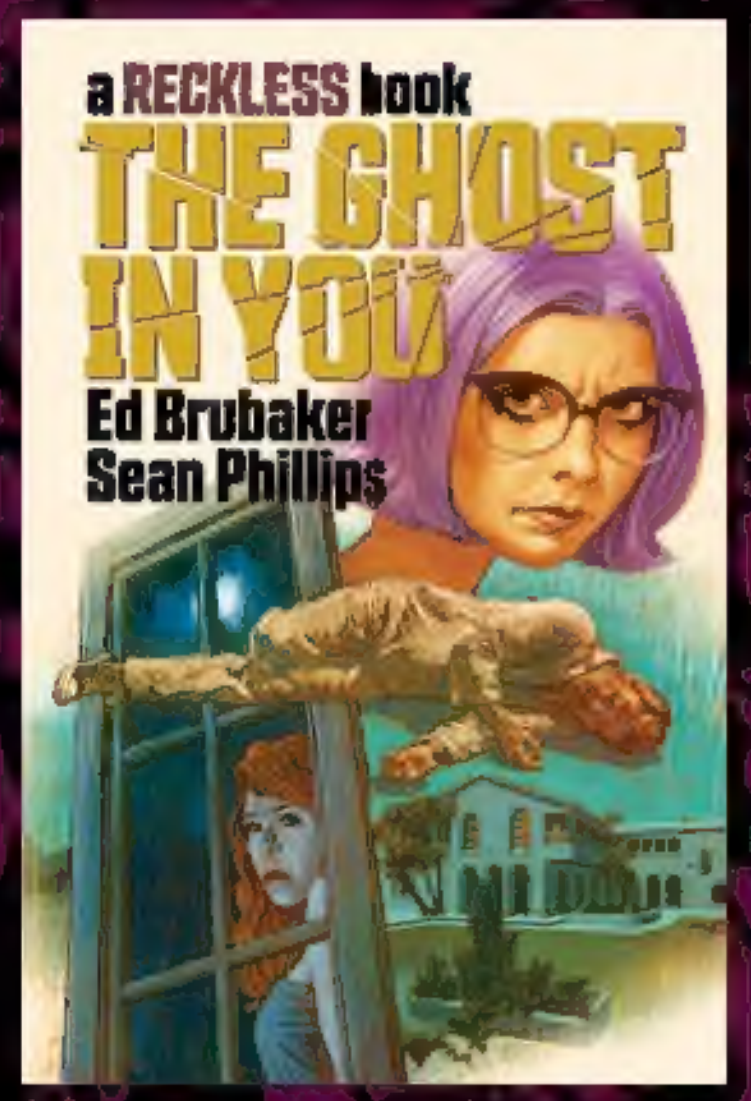
- CHARLES YU


ED BRUBAKER
SEAN PHILLIPS
PULP

EISNER AWARD WINNER — BEST ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL

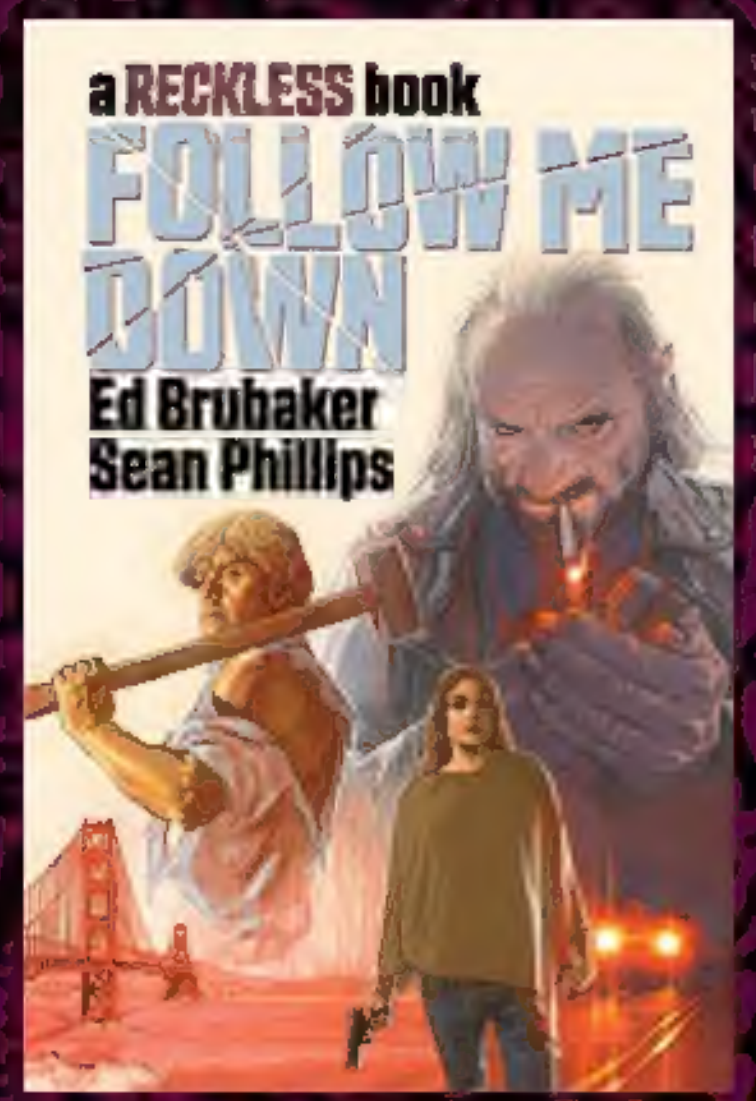
RINGO AWARD WINNER — BEST ORIGINAL GRAPHIC NOVEL

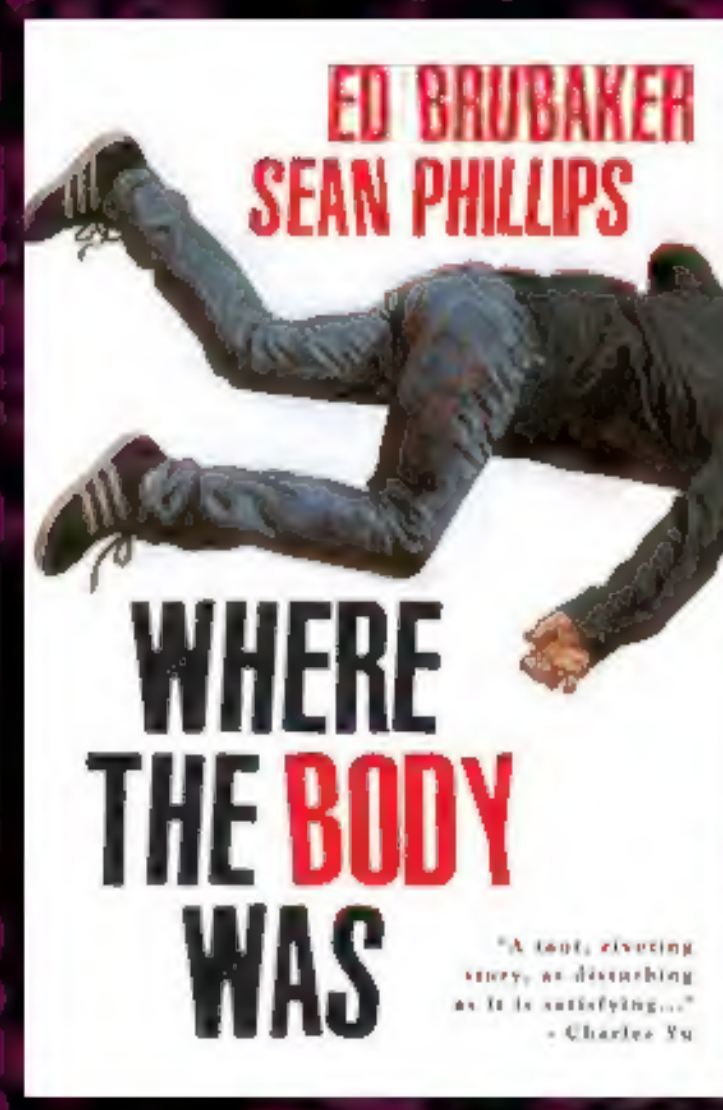

ED BRUBAKER
SEAN PHILLIPS
PULP
THE PROCESS EDITION


a RECKLESS book
THE GHOST IN YOU
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips

"RECKLESS IS AN ABSOLUTE RUSH . YOU GOTTA HAVE IT."

— JOE HILL (LOCKE & KEY, NOS4A2)


a RECKLESS book
FOLLOW ME DOWN
Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips


ED BRUBAKER
SEAN PHILLIPS
WHERE THE BODY WAS
"A taut, riveting story, as disturbing as it is satisfying." - Charles Yu

"A MASTERFULLY-TOLD PUZZLEBOX MYSTERY WITH A FIERCELY BEATING HUMAN HEART."

— JORDAN HARPER

BIOGRAPHIES

ED BRUBAKER IS ONE OF THE MOST ACCLAIMED WRITERS IN COMICS, HAVING WON OVER A DOZEN EISNER AND HARVEY AWARDS SO FAR. HIS MANY GRAPHIC NOVELS WITH ARTIST SEAN PHILLIPS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED AROUND THE WORLD TO GREAT SUCCESS. OUTSIDE OF COMICS, BRUBAKER HAS BEEN A WRITER FOR HBO'S WESTWORLD, CO-CREATED TOO OLD TO DIE YOUNG WITH NICOLAS WINDING REFN, AND IS CURRENTLY THE SHOWRUNNER FOR AN ADAPTATION OF CRIMINAL AT AMAZON PRIME VIDEO.

DRAWING COMICS PROFESSIONALLY SINCE THE AGE OF FIFTEEN, EISNER AWARD WINNING SEAN PHILLIPS HAS WORKED FOR ALL THE MAJOR PUBLISHERS. SINCE DRAWING SLEEPER, HELLBLAZER, BATMAN, X-MEN, MARVEL ZOMBIES, AND STEPHEN KING'S THE DARK TOWER, SEAN HAS CONCENTRATED ON CREATOR-OWNED BOOKS WITH ED BRUBAKER INCLUDING CRIMINAL, KILL OR BE KILLED, INCOGNITO, FATALE, THE FADE OUT, PULP, NIGHT FEVER, WHERE THE BODY WAS, AND THE RECKLESS SERIES.

HE LIVES IN THE LAKE DISTRICT IN THE UK WHERE HE IS CURRENTLY DRAWING THE NEXT BRUBAKER/PHILLIPS BOOK.

JACOB PHILLIPS IS A COMIC ARTIST AND COLOURIST RESIDING IN TROPICAL MANCHESTER. HE HAS BEEN DRAWING HIS WHOLE LIFE, SELF PUBLISHING FIRST COMIC 'ROBOY' AT THE AGE OF 11 AND SELLING IT AT BRIGHTON COMIC CON. SKIP FORWARD 19 YEARS AND TODAY HE IS THE ARTIST ON THAT TEXAS BLOOD AND THE ENFIELD GANG MASSACRE WITH WRITER CHRIS CONDON, AND NEWBURN WITH CHIP ZDARSKY FROM IMAGE COMICS, AS WELL AS BEING A TWO TIMES EISNER AWARD NOMINATED COLOURIST ON BOOKS SUCH AS RECKLESS, CRIMINAL, AND NIGHT FEVER.

HOUSES OF THE UNHOLY IS A RIVETING HORROR THRILL-RIDE FROM BESTSELLING CREATORS ED BRUBAKER AND SEAN PHILLIPS, THE AWARD-WINNING TEAM BEHIND CRIMINAL, RECKLESS, THE FADE OUT, NIGHT FEVER AND WHERE THE BODY WAS.

AN FBI AGENT FROM THE CULT CRIME BEAT AND A WOMAN WITH A PAST LINKED TO THE SATANIC PANIC ARE DRAWN INTO A HUNT FOR AN INSANE KILLER HIDING IN THE SHADOWS OF THE OCCULT UNDERWORLD. NATALIE BURNS ONCE THOUGHT SHE'D ESCAPED HER PAST, BUT WHAT IF ALL YOUR BAD DECISIONS ARE JUST MORE GHOSTS WAITING FOR YOU IN THE DARK?

PRAISE FOR BRUBAKER & PHILLIPS:

"BRUBAKER AND PHILLIPS'S BOOKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF THEIR TIME."

—BRIAN K. VAUGHAN, SAGA, PAPER GIRLS

"BRUBAKER & PHILLIPS CONTINUE TO MAKE SWEET MUSIC TOGETHER, BROADCAST TO YOU IN THE FORM OF THE BEST COMICS AROUND."

—ROBERT KIRKMAN, INVINCIBLE, THE WALKING DEAD

"A NEW TITLE FROM THE SHARPSHOOTERS BEHIND CRIMINAL AND FATALE IS REASON ENOUGH TO GO ON LIVING."

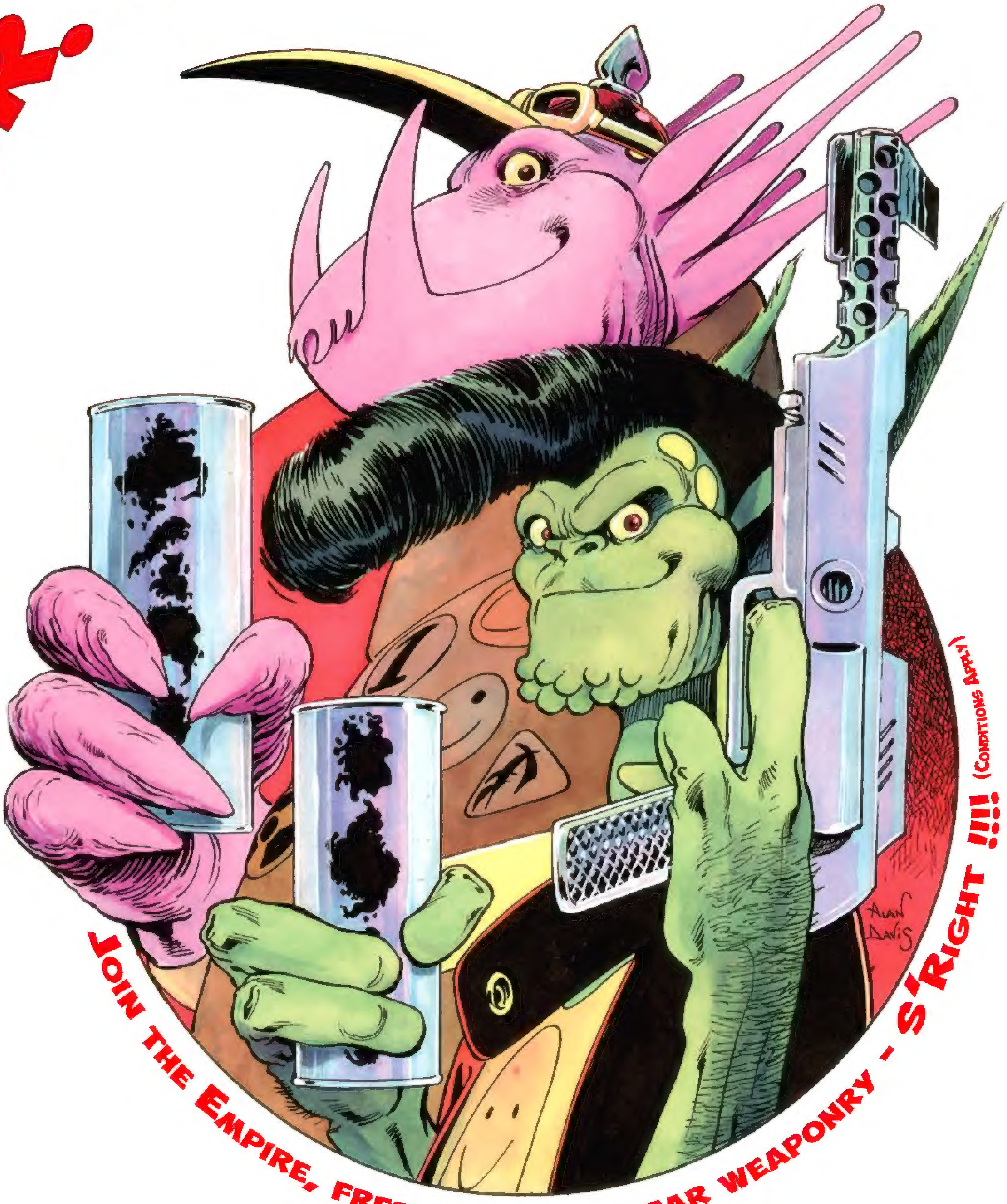
—JOE HILL, LOCKE & KEY, HORNS, NOS4A2

image

CRIME & MYSTERY / THRILLER

RATED M / MATURE

D.R. & QUINCH


ALAN DAVIS
JOIN THE EMPIRE, FREE THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONRY - S'RIGHT !!!! (CONDITIONS APPLY)

K6 NW